

CAMP RUCKUS • FAST FOOD JUNGLE • TAXES FOR TERRORISTS?

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

April 30, 2001

GLOBAL WARNING

It's Now
or Never

By Bill McKibben

The Myth of
Living Safely
in a Toxic
World

By Sandra
Steingraber

Plus:
10 Green Heroes
Bush's Hostile
Environment



\$2.50 Canada \$3.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

"... with liberty and justice for all"

James Weinstein
Founding Editor and Publisher

Editor: Joel Bleifuss
Managing Editor: Craig Aaron
Senior Editors: Patricia Aufderheide, David Moberg, Salim Muwakkil
Associate Editor: Kristin Kolb-Angelbeck
Culture Editor: Joe Knowles
Contributing Editors: Terry J. Allen, Bill Boisvert, Barbara Ehrenreich, Laura Flanders, Annette Fuentes, Juan Gonzalez, David Graeber, Miles Harvey, Paul Hokenos, George Hodak, Doug Ireland, Dave Mulcahey, Kim Phillips-Fein, Jeffrey St. Clair, Jane Slaughter, Jason Vest, Fred Weir, G. Pascal Zachary
Proofreaders: Jean Kang, Alan Kimmel, Norman Wishner
Interns: Emily Brooks, Esra Khalil, Susana Torres

Art Director: Jim Rinnert
Associate Art Director: Steve Anderson
Illustrator: Terry LaBan
Webmaster: Steve Anderson

Publisher: Bob Burnett
Associate Publisher: Julie Fain
Circulation Director: Luli Buxton
Circulation Manager: Peter Hoyt

In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 25, No. 11) went to press on March 30 for newsstand sales April 16 to April 30, 2001.

The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©2001 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Contact the union at (212) 254-0279 or <http://www.nwu.org>.

Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For **subscription questions** and **address changes** call (800) 827-0270.

Editorial correspondence and **letters** should be sent to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Phone: (773) 772-0100. Fax: (773) 772-4180. E-mail: itt@inthesetimes.com.

Publisher does not assume liability for **unsolicited manuscripts** or material. Manuscripts unaccompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. **All letters** received by *In These Times* become property of the magazine. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form.

For back issues and advertising rates, call toll free (888) READ-ITT. Available back issues are \$3 each, \$5 each overseas. Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through the IPA International Sales Cooperative at (415) 643-4401, or jesse@bigtoppubs.com.

© EQUUS 759-C



Publisher's Notes

Growing up in the United States, each American child is taught that everyone is created equal and therefore has an equal chance to get to the top. The ideological glue that binds this promise is the myth of the "level playing field," a concept of our democracy as a system that rewards the individual based on merit.

Regrettably we do not live in a country where everyone is born equal. One's gender, ethnicity, family income and other individual circumstances shouldn't make a difference, but they do. We shouldn't abandon our egalitarian ideals, but we need to speak the truth. To achieve a society based on fairness we must make a number of major changes in our current system.

Once upon a time there was a social contract in this country (mostly negotiated by FDR) where the rich accepted that they would pay considerably more taxes in order to benefit the less fortunate in society. They understood that their money not only helped level the playing field, but also helped to preserve public safety. But times have changed. Conservatives have replaced this social contract that emphasized the common good with a "winner-takes-all" morality that has at its cornerstone a "free market" ideology.

This can be seen most recently in the current Bush tax cut proposal, which will unashamedly provide 43 percent of the benefits to the richest 1 percent of Americans. When queried about this, Republicans respond, "So what if they get the most benefit? They pay most of the taxes." In effect saying, "So what if the prosperity of the past few years has disproportionately benefited the wealthiest 1 percent? That's the way the free market system works."

Conservatives never mention redistribution of wealth as a social goal and do not support those programs that have this as a feature, such as increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit. But to preserve the concepts of fairness, we could begin by providing fair pay for those who work. That means raising the minimum wage so it becomes a living wage. That some corporate executives receive salaries in the millions while many of their employees are paid wages that put them below the poverty line is obscene and antithetical to democracy.

We also need to guarantee that all families have food, shelter, health care, childcare, education and the other essentials of a life with dignity. We should legislatively mandate that corporations provide health insurance for all employees, including part-time and temporary workers, and that they provide all workers with childcare benefits, since in most American families both parents need to work. For those who cannot work, a real safety net should be in place. It's immoral that so many of the members of our society live in poverty (one in five children). Some of the adults in this group either can't find work or for valid reasons can't work.

Where they are present, unions represent a strong countervailing force to the power of corporate executives. Union members have better pay (typically 30 percent higher), benefits and job security than their nonunion counterparts. But the national membership in unions has steadily declined over recent years—and now hovers around 10 percent of the work force. This tide must be turned: The ability of unions to organize needs to be strengthened with an overhaul of the nation's labor laws.

If our goal is the creation of a system based on fairness, then we need to take action to ensure that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is an option for everyone and not just for the well-connected few. We must make reforms that really level the playing field, democratize corporations

If we value human rights over property rights, we can start by opposing the Bush tax cut.

and regulate the marketplace. If we value human rights over property rights and the rule of law over the marketplace, we need to democratize our economy so it operates for the good of all the people.

We can start by vocally opposing the Bush tax cut.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you at bburnett@inthesetimes.com. ■

Bob Burnett

In These Times

Volume 25, Number 11

April 30, 2001

www.inthesetimes.com

2 Letters

3 Editorial By Dean Baker

Market opportunities.

4 News

Back to the brink in the Balkans, Israel's blockade against Palestinians, death falls from the sky in Colombia, freedom of speech (sort of) in Singapore, the Horo-Witch project, and the war against the war on drugs in New Mexico.

12 The Flanders Files By Laura Flanders

Taxes for terrorists?

13 Viewpoint By Kip Sullivan

Health care privacy for sale.

Global Warning: A Special Report

14 Now or Never

By Bill McKibben
What's an environmentalist to do?

15 Green Heroes

By Kristin Kolb-Angelbeck
People making a difference.

19 The Myth of Living Safely in a Toxic World

By Sandra Steingraber
We cannot opt out of the food chain.

24 Hostile Environment

By Jeffrey St. Clair
The cash box conservationists come to Washington.

29 The Fast Food Jungle

By Caleb Mason
BOOKS: Eric Schlosser's exposé of our *Fast Food Nation*.

31 Noise of Art

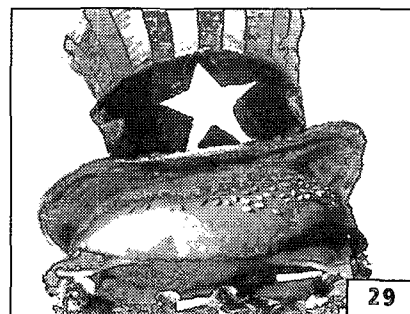
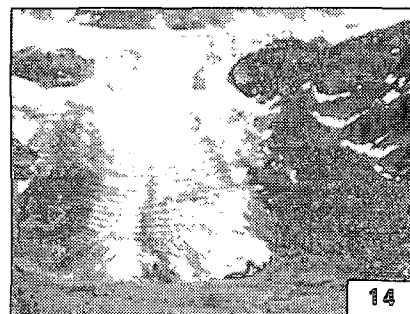
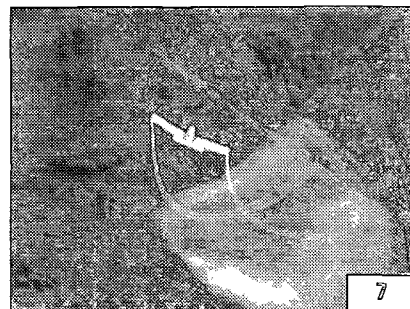
By Anthony Mariani
MUSIC: DJ Spooky, "That Subliminal Kid."

33 Feminists on Film

By Rachel Rinaldo
BOOKS: Alexandra Juhasz talks to *Women of Vision*.

38 Camp Ruckus

By Ben Winters
Basic training for the New New Left.



Cover Illustration: Steve Anderson

Letters

Flanders Misfires

Several premises of Laura Flanders' article on Iraq are absurd ("Media Bomb on Baghdad Story," April 2). It is impossible for journalists to check where bombs fall in Baghdad because the Iraqi regime does not allow them to visit such sites. The Baghdad regime is also known to scour hospitals to find "appropriate victims" to show the press following bombing raids. I am not defending the bombing raids—I have great sympathy for the gist of her argument—I'm just saying that the abhorrent behavior of the Iraqi regime is no less responsible for the current political quagmire than U.S. or British policy.

Saddam Hussein was reported last year, for instance, to have emptied Baghdad's Radwaniyya prison of several dozen young, mostly Shi'ite opponents, taken them by bus to a remote location, then buried them alive in a pit. The West is clearly committing injustices in maintaining sanctions on Iraq's people, but Saddam is a disgusting thug. No question about it, and never forget that, or else your defense of "the poor Iraqi civilians" becomes a lame, limp argument without meaning.

Edward Yeranian
Beirut, Lebanon

Golden Grating

While Sandy Zipp definitely does a better job of illustrating the gentrification process than the Rebecca Solnit book he reviews ("The Battle of San Francisco," April 2), he lets her off the hook too easily and also omits questions of race and class—a discourse that artists conveniently ignore.

Property values are racialized. A building, with solely black or Latino tenants has a lower value. But once a white "artist" moves in, the property value goes up. Evictions and displacement were already a fact of life for blacks and Latinos in San Francisco in the '60s (thanks to urban renewal and despite white flight). Now that the ghettos are becoming no more, blacks and Latinos are losing their community to the sons and daughters of white flighters and being forced out to the least desirable postindustrial suburbs—where they still pay more for both housing and transportation to their jobs.

The sons and daughters of the white flighters celebrate an imagined community of artists and wannabe-sophisticated types. These middle-class kids pretending to be poor only hurt those who are involuntarily poor, disrupting everything from access to low-cost housing to bargains at

the Goodwill. The imitation poor move in, prices go up, and the real poor have even less consumer power.

The crisis that Solnit talks about is only a crisis because it affects her tribe of urban missionaries, homesteaders and outcasts. The artists that she defends are not as numerous as she would imply—just large enough to homestead on the city's real estate frontier. Having been born and raised in San Francisco, the only artists I knew growing up were graffiti artists and muralists attempting to claim the Mission District as our turf while city planners tried to remove us.

There are more than two sides to this story, and this one needs to be included.

Michael Calderon-Zaks
San Francisco

Not long ago I was in a restaurant in Lake Tahoe outside of San Francisco, sitting, I soon learned, next to a table full of developers. Three couples composed of plastic women and well groomed, seal-like men.

I couldn't help but overhear their conversation, which turned on the profitability of developing various properties around the city, and eventually settled on the new board of supervisors who were "undemocratic" and "positively dictatorial."

They found themselves surprised to be fans of Willie Brown. "Who would imagine that I'd be voting for Willie Brown," one surprised matron commented, "the lesser of two evils."

"You knew what you got when you bought Willie," said another.

"Yes," the matron concurred, "he stays bought. And that's the best you can ask for in a politician."

Indeed, San Francisco was sold out by a mayor bribed by developers maximizing their profits at the expense of the majority of the residents and thereby making the city a bedroom community for the Valley, a semi-suburban playground for wealthy commuters carefully expunged of the less wealthy, the discomfiting and ultimately of all character.

I moved to Oakland.

David Gessel
Oakland, California

We Love You Too

I've been reading *In These Times* since the mid-'70s, when I was a high school kid in rapidly deindustrializing Chester, Pennsylvania, dreaming of a career in journalism, inspired by things like the anti-nuke movement and Woodward and

Bernstein. I was a news junkie, and noted that *In These Times* was a tabloidish publication that seemed to publish the really important stories three years ahead of everybody else. *In These Times* taught me what news really was, and even six years at the Annenberg School in Philadelphia couldn't take that away.

Over the decades, *In These Times* has been a constant, as is my recommending it to anybody who'll listen. I just renewed my subscription for two more years, even though occasionally you do something really stupid, like blast Nader voters and demand we cash in our consciences for strategic support of the Democratic Party that has been turning its back on people like mine. Even so, the arrival of each issue is cause for excitement in this household.

There are so few truly, sustainedly progressive "discursive spaces" to go to these days. *In These Times* always stays grounded in issues, like equity, not in labels like socialism, and that is such a breath of fresh air.

I moved from Wisconsin to San Francisco two years ago (terrible timing, by the way) and am now in Berkeley. There is something of a true progressive renaissance going on here, owing to the excesses of the Silicon Oligarchy. But having just gotten back from my 10th Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference, I still feel that the Upper Midwest is where progressivism is incubating, and where it is radiating from. *In These Times* has three fingers, Chinese-medicine style, on the pulses of Robert LaFollette's dream, as well as the present realities.

Every so often I like to toss you a few lines and rave about how glad I am that *In These Times* exists and continues to be so damned outstanding. Only a few institutions have earned my undying loyalty, and *In These Times* has been one of them for over 25 years, right up there with constitutional democracy and the State Capitol Credit Union in Madison.

Michele Gale-Sinex
Berkeley, California

Please send letters to:

IN THESE TIMES

2040 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Chicago, IL 60647

Or e-mail: itr@inthesetimes.com

Please keep your letter short and include your address and daytime phone number.

Market Opportunities

By Dean Baker

What's the difference between the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, National Public Radio and *In These Times*? *In These Times* explicitly predicted the impending collapse of the stock market bubble (see "After the Fall," December 12, 1999). So, if you lost a fortune in the market, don't blame us.

The stock market crash was both predictable and inevitable, as we noted at the time. The list of people who deserve blame for contributing to an unsustainable bubble is long. At the top are Alan Greenspan, Bill Clinton and Treasury Secretaries Robert Rubin and Larry Summers, all of whom must have recognized the existence of the stock bubble and should have warned the public of the danger. Wall Street and the financial industry are also real villains in this story. They herded people into the market by assuring them it was virtually a sure bet. In the process, they collected huge commissions on brokerage and account management fees.

But we have to move beyond gloating and finger pointing: The stock market crash has created real problems for the economy that must be dealt with quickly. Most immediately, the decline in the stock market threatens the economy with a severe recession. The stock market was propping up demand both through the wealth effect on consumption and by providing investment capital to start-ups.

With the plunge in stock prices, these sources of stimulus fall away. Consumers seeing their 401(k)s shrink are likely to cut back their spending and start saving in a big way. The boom in high-tech investment has turned into a bust, as firms struggle with both overcapacity and a shortage of investment capital.

To limit the extent of the downturn, it is essential that Greenspan and the Fed



Told You So: Progressives must use the stock market crash to change the shape of political debate.

go much further in lowering interest rates than they have to date. Greenspan was way too slow in lowering interest rates in the 1990-1991 recession. It will take a lot of political pressure to make sure that he gets it right this time.

The federal government must also be prepared to come forward with serious fiscal stimulus. This will mean forgetting about "saving" the Social Security surplus and paying down the debt. Deficit spending to fund progressive tax cuts or neglected

social needs can do much to stimulate the economy and keep people employed. There was never a real point to paying off the debt anyway, and the sooner the congressional Democrats recognize this fact and return to reality, the better.

While addressing the immediate economic problems created by the crash must be the first priority, progressives should

seize this opportunity to change the terms of political debate. The market worshippers had everything their way and it led to disaster. This point should be said loudly and clearly in every forum available.

Not only should we attempt to rein in financial markets, with measures such as stock transfer taxes, but we have to move beyond the ideological fixation with the market that has dominated the nation's politics in the past two decades. At the top of the list, we can throw the plans for privatizing Social Security in the trash heap. Tens of millions of investors are thankful that Social Security will still be there for them.

It's time to get serious about a progressive agenda and push for a national health care system modeled along the lines of the old Medicare program. Every industrialized nation in the world can provide universal health care coverage at less than half the per-person cost of the U.S. system. The evidence is airtight and overwhelming—government-run systems are more efficient.

The list of areas requiring new thinking is long and stretches into every segment of the economy and society—electricity regulation, airline regulation, regulation of the airwaves, copyrights and patents. The era when the right could count on a reflexive bias toward its solutions should be over. It is time for a new pragmatic progressive agenda. ■

Terry LaBan



Back to the Brink

Albanian attacks on Macedonia and Serbia could lead to another Balkan war

By Jeremy Scahill

TRNAVA, YUGOSLAVIA—Two years after the beginning of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the Balkans are careening toward the brink of yet another war. But with Slobodan Milosevic gone from power, it is not Belgrade that is the instigator this time.

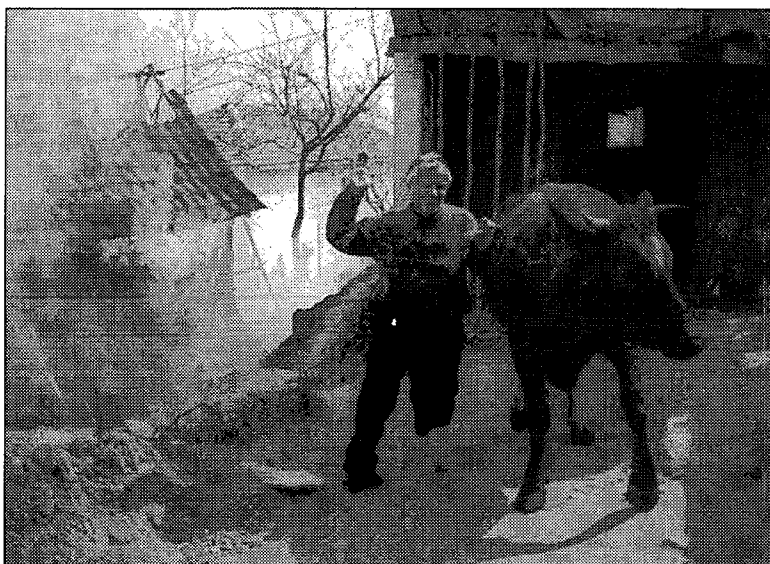
Armed ethnic Albanians—once the darlings of the West—are dramatically expanding their violent campaign for a greater Kosovo beyond the borders of Yugoslavia and into Macedonia. What two years ago was portrayed as a fight to liberate the Kosovo Albanians from Serb repression is evolving into a war against Slavic governments in the region.

The Albanian rebels' regular attacks on Yugoslavian security forces and Serb villages, which have forced some 180,000 Serbs from Kosovo, received scant media attention and only mild concern from the international community, as they were categorized as part of the ongoing conflict between Serbs and Albanians. It was only when Macedonia recently became engulfed in battles with the Albanian militants that the world began to take notice.

The northern town of Tetovo has been the latest flashpoint, with Macedonian security forces pounding positions of the so-called National Liberation Army (whose Albanian acronym UCK is identical to that of the KLA). In late March, after securing varying degrees of support from Western governments and strong backing from Russia, Macedonia launched an offensive against the militants, retaking

villages held by the UCK. The offensive was bolstered by weapons shipments from neighboring Bulgaria and four Mi-24 attack helicopters from Ukraine.

Yugoslavia's defense forces have been eager to carry out this type of action in southern Serbia, with officials saying it would take a maximum of two days to complete (see "War Without End," March 19). But both NATO and the new authorities in Belgrade have been reluctant to authorize such an offensive, given the recent history. Recently, however, the armed Albanians operating in Serbia repeatedly have broken a fragile NATO-brokered ceasefire. In addition to regular attacks on army and police positions, the Albanian militants have taken four Serbian civilians hostage along with two Yugoslav Army soldiers. This is quickly making the argument for restraint from Yugoslavia's forces untenable.



A man tries to save the cows after Macedonian police set his barn on fire.

THORNE ANDERSON

Though the publicly stated aim of the armed Albanians in both Serbia and Macedonia is to gain greater rights for Albanian people, behind the scenes the rhetoric is more transparent. At an armed Albanian camp near the Yugoslavia-Macedonia border, commanders say they are fighting against "Slavic terror" and intend to annex Albanian-populated areas of both countries and unite them with Kosovo. At the base of the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) in the Serbian village of Lucane, an Albanian commander who identifies

himself as Ardian says that if Yugoslavian forces attempt to retake the village, "We won't be awaiting them with flowers." Another young fighter adds bluntly: "We'll die here before we let them back."

Such a battle may not be far off. NATO has given the Yugoslavian army the go-ahead to further deploy its forces in the NATO-imposed buffer zone separating Kosovo from Serbia. The zone—which the army had been banned from entering since the end of the NATO bombing—includes the main strongholds of the UCPMB militants. Announcing the deployment, NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson stood beside U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and said, "It is unacceptable for the Ground Safety Zone to be used as some kind of safe-haven for extremists."

The move outraged Albanians in the area. Riza Halimi, the head of the Party for Democratic Action—the largest Albanian political party in the Presevo Valley—says NATO should be widening the zone instead of reducing it. "We cannot see this deployment as anything other than open pressure on the Albanian population in this region," Halimi says. "There is now a real danger for a further ethnic cleansing which will escalate the already difficult situation."

As Yugoslavian army personnel carriers zoomed past the predominantly ethnic Albanian village of Trnava along the Macedonian border, villagers gathered at a corner store. "NATO made a mistake and we are going to suffer because of that," says Baki Beqiri, an unemployed factory worker. "That army was in Kosovo and they massacred our people."

Despite the ire it is evoking from the Albanian community, the rhetoric emanating from NATO headquarters in Brussels is that of support for both Yugoslavia and Macedonia. As Robertson

said recently, "NATO will not permit a changing of borders in the Balkans."

But the reality remains that the forces attacking both countries are supplied from Kosovo, which is under a joint U.N./NATO administration. Macedonian Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski recently blasted the United States and Germany—whose troops patrol the areas of Kosovo bordering northern Macedonia—for failing to halt the "terrorist" attacks against his country. "You can't persuade anyone in Macedonia today that the governments of the United States and Germany do not know who the terrorist leaders are and what they want," he said. "They could stop them."

Yugoslavian President Vojislav Kostunica echoed those sentiments in Belgrade. He accused the NATO-led forces in Kosovo of having "stimulated terrorism" instead of fighting it. "I ask once again: Is NATO a military or a humanitarian organization? What is the reason for its presence there?" Kostunica described the return of the Yugoslavian forces to the buffer zone as "one more proof of how inefficient in all these years KFOR has been." ■

Jeremy Scahill is a journalist based in Belgrade. He reports frequently for Pacifica radio.

Will Milosevic Go to The Hague?

Amid growing demands from Belgrade for a war crimes investigation of the armed Albanians' attacks on Serbs in the Presevo Valley, the battle over the fate of Slobodan Milosevic rages on. The threats from Washington of freezing \$100 million in aid to Serbia if it fails to "cooperate" with The Hague Tribunal seem to have been tabled for the time being. Senior government officials have indicated that Milosevic could be arrested shortly after March 31—the U.S. deadline—though they caution extradition would be another matter. Belgrade has handed over one suspect wanted by the tribunal, while another recently turned himself in. But these men are not Milosevic and the extradition was done against the wishes of Yugoslavian President Vojislav Kostunica, who called it "a precedent that should not have been set."

To the anger of many within the new Serbian government, Kostunica has re-

Down and Out in Ramallah

Palestinian poverty rises as Israel seals off the West Bank.

By Charmaine Seitz

RAMALLAH, THE WEST BANK—A Palestinian in his twenties gets into a taxi at the new Israeli checkpoint set up near the West Bank town of Ramallah. The cars around us roar, straining against the noon-hour bottleneck. The man is so angry that his hands shake as he gives the driver his fare. "I have been sitting here since 9 o'clock," he says. "The soldiers kept us here because the guy with me shouted at them. But I have now spent half the day getting to work." His cell phone rings: it's his boss at the factory asking where he is.

Over the past six months, the West Bank and Gaza Strip have descended into economic crisis. Since late September, Israel has closed off individual Palestinian villages and towns with military checkpoints, cement blocks and deep earthen trenches to prevent Palestinian movement. Justified by the Israeli government as needed to prevent

attacks against Israelis, the blockade has stopped the movement of food, workers and Palestinians seeking medical treatment. But it has not stopped the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation.

"Assume that the closures are lifted today," says Sebastien Dessus, an economist for the World Bank. "It would take years to return to the former situation." By the end of the year, he says that the percentage of Palestinian poor in the Gaza Strip could rival that of most African nations.

In February, Dessus and a team of World Bank economists completed a report on Palestinian poverty, and the numbers are not encouraging. Three years ago, 23 percent of the 3 million Palestinians fell below a poverty line of \$2 a day. But then there was some reason to be hopeful. Many people had moved above that line despite only modest economic growth since peace agreements with Israel. In 1998, the Palestinian economy was improving. Unemployment had dropped to its lowest point in years. Investors were taking the plunge, starting big money ventures like a casino in Jericho and an Intercontinental Hotel in Bethlehem.

Then disaster struck. After six months of the Israeli-imposed closure, the Palestinian economy is in shambles.

Israel has sealed Palestinian exits to the outside world, closed off West Bank towns and villages in some 60 areas and partitioned the Gaza Strip into several separate sections. If conditions stay as they are, Dessus says, the percentage of Palestinians in poverty could soon rival that of Bolivia or Sri Lanka. By December, two-thirds of Gaza's population of more than 1 million will have descended into poverty.

The reasons for this impoverishment are clear. Closures have prevented 130,000 people from going to jobs inside Israel. Factories have reduced their production, either because materials are not available or because products cannot be shipped to the market. "Business has dropped by 60 to 70 percent," says Palestinian economist Samir Abdullah. "Employment in the domestic economy has dropped by 20 percent."

The natural results of impoverishment are rapidly taking hold. In 1998, the

Jeremy Scahill

West Bank and Gaza Strip boasted rates of literacy and infant mortality comparable with upper-middle-income countries such as Argentina and Saudi Arabia. Now, according to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Palestinians are seeing a 58 percent rise in stillborn births and falling vaccination rates.

"According to our staff, there are quite a number of families cutting out meals," says Nabil Handal, chief operating officer of Catholic Relief Services, adding that half of the preschool students at CRS-funded schools have dropped out due to the added cost and inability to travel. Next in line are those dropping out of college. And women are increasingly choosing to give birth at home because of the cost and danger in going to a hospital.

"The Israeli policy of collective punishment," Abdullah explains, "is that they



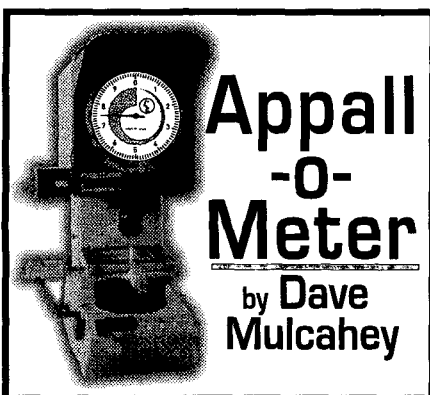
FAYEZ NURELDINE/AFP

Palestinian teen-agers dismantle Israeli barricades at the Erez checkpoint in Gaza.

want the Palestinian people to criticize the Palestinian Authority and say that it is doing nothing to mitigate Israeli policies."

Meanwhile, international relief is pouring in. In February, the Red Cross

began to distribute nearly \$1 million worth of sugar, tea and personal hygiene items to the 35,000 West Bank families hit hardest by the Israeli blockade. UNRWA, which supports Palestinian



The Old Switcheroo 3.9

These days, with presidents selling pardons and fugitive money-launderers sitting on senators' fundraising committees, the political peccadilloes committed north of our border seem almost cute. Rahim Jaffer, an MP from Edmonton, has been demoted in the ranks of Canada's right-wing Alliance Party for his part in a hoax pulled over on Vancouver radio station CKNW. It seems that the man speaking in a phone interview with the station was not Jaffer, but his executive assistant, Matthew Johnston, impersonating his boss.

Astonishingly, at least one listener was paying attention and alerted the station to the deception. At first, reports the *Globe and Mail*, Jaffer maintained that he had done the interview himself. A few days later, however, under increasing pressure, he copped to covering up the imposture. Johnston resigned, explaining that he had double-booked Jaffer and didn't want to break his commitment to the radio station.

Potemkin Proles 7.5

The human-authenticity prop is one of the honored visual clichés of American politics. You can't sign a bill gutting welfare or ceding big chunks of the public domain to boddlers without a backdrop of inner-city cherubs, honest toilers or strong, silent cops to ratify the deed.

Sometimes, however, the deed in question is so odious that real people can't be suckered into playing along. Thus a memo circulated by the National Association of Manufacturers, and leaked to the *Washington Post*, in reference to a media event orchestrated by House Speaker Dennis Hastert in support of the Bush tax cut: "The theme involves working Americans. Visually, this will involve a sea of hard hats, which our construction and contractor and building groups are working very hard to provide. But the Speaker's office was very clear in saying that they do not need people in suits. If people want to participate—AND WE DO NEED BODIES—they must be DRESSED DOWN, appear to be REAL WORKER types, etc. We plan to have hard hats for people to wear."

Tory Love Affair 5.6

There is a point where political polling yields too much information. In February, the Virgin Group conducted an Internet survey of British college students to see whom they found more sexually desirable, Prime Minister Tony Blair or Conservative Party leader William Hague. It turns out

the ladies love the balding, pug-faced Tory, preferring him by a landslide 61 percent to 39 percent. More than 70 percent of the survey's heterosexual male respondents said they'd sooner knock boots with Hague's wife, Ffion, than have a go with Cherie Blair. Meanwhile, gay men preferred Blair four-to-one. And Home Secretary Mo Mowlam, who would sweat out a beauty contest with Robert Bork, was easily trounced by her Conservative shadow minister.

The results of the poll may have set off a round of high-fiving at Conservative Party headquarters, but do they mean anything? The Tories seem to think so. "This is further evidence that William Hague is truly in touch with the British people," a party spokesman told the *Sunday Telegraph*.

Uh-huh. The poll apparently did not query respondents as to which candidate is more likely to make them sleep on the wet spot. ■



TERRY LABAN

refugees, has made a \$39 million appeal to funders for employment generation programs. The European Union has put up \$60 million to pay 150,000 Palestinian public employees. Even the World Bank has contributed, taking the inordinate step of granting, rather than loaning, \$12 million to the Palestinian government. Soon, the U.S. development agency, USAID, will join the chorus, handing out \$20 million for job-creation programs in Palestinian areas. "I feel like we are always solving problems that should not have occurred," says Thomas Neu, director of American Near East Refugee Aid, a recipient of USAID funds. "I think the most important thing right now is to release the siege."

The U.S. State Department has said that the Israeli closure does "nothing to enhance security in the region," but has yet to actively confront Israel over its measures against the Palestinians.

Even some Israeli leaders have acknowledged that the closure of Palestinian areas does more harm than good. "This policy cannot protect Israeli citizens from terrorist attacks," said Ami Ayalon, former head of the Israeli secret service, in a statement to the Israeli press. "On the contrary, this policy will lead the Palestinian society toward further violence and terror."

Just after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon took office, a new checkpoint was established between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Traffic was backed up for a mile as Israeli soldiers searched every car and meticulously checked the papers of every driver. Most people abandoned their cars and walked through the checkpoint completely unimpeded, albeit nervous under the guns of a tank parked on the hill. After the new checkpoint made international news, Israel said it had been only trying to catch "terrorists" and that the closure of Ramallah would be eased. Since then, traffic passes more easily through the area, although the rudiments of a checkpoint remain, ready to close the area at any time.

In the face of this, Palestinians remain stalwart. "If there is no pay, people will wait," Abdullah says. "They will not go to the streets and demonstrate against the Palestinian Authority. But they might go to the checkpoints and fight the Israelis." ■

Death Falls from the Sky

Plan Colombia's fumigation campaign destroys everything in its path

By Garry M. Leech

LA HORMIGA, COLOMBIA—With 62,000 acres of coca destroyed, the politicians and generals in Washington and Bogota are calling Plan Colombia's initial fumigation campaign a success. But on the ground in Putumayo, Colombia's principal coca growing region, people watched in horror as the deadly mist drifted down and stuck to everything in sight. Their food crops turned brown, wilted and slowly died. Their children and animals became sick. If death didn't come at the hands of the guerrillas, the paramilitaries or the Colombian army, it fell out of the sky.

The fumigation campaign began on December 19. For the next six weeks, U.S.-supplied helicopters swooped down almost daily to unload soldiers whose mission was to prevent attacks by leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries. The aerial spraying dumped an estimated 85,000 gallons of the herbicide glyphosate onto Putumayo's coca fields from an altitude of 100 feet. The fumigation campaign in Putumayo utilized two of the three U.S.-trained anti-narcotics battalions and 15 of the 60 helicopters that are part of the \$1.3 billion aid package approved by Congress last year.

Serious questions have been raised about the tactics used during the fumigation. Even Monsanto—the manufacturer of Round-Up Ultra, the chemical used for coca eradication in Colombia—cautions against aerial application at altitudes greater than 10 feet above crops because higher altitudes increase the risk of drift. Monsanto also warns that "even very small amounts of Round-Up herbicide brands may damage crops if allowed to drift into fields adjoining the target area."

Another reason the herbicide is so destructive, says Ivan Rios, spokesman for Colombia's largest guerrilla group, the

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), is because "they are fumigating with glyphosate mixed with a special ingredient that sticks to the leaves and is more harmful to the people."

That "special ingredient" is called Cosmo-Flux, which according to Ricardo Vargas Meza, a researcher for Accion Andina, an organization studying drug policy in the Andes, "makes the glyphosate heavier and stickier so it adheres better to the coca plants."

Cosmo-Flux also makes the herbicide more potent. "Cosmo-Flux substantially increases the biological activity of the agrochemicals, allowing better results with smaller doses," says Dr. Elsa Nivia, Colombia's Regional Director of the Pesticide Action Network. But the fumigation campaign is adding Cosmo-Flux to an herbicide dosage five times greater than that recommended by Monsanto.

According to many campesinos in Putumayo, the herbicide also contaminated maize, yucca, plantains, animals and even children. Some of the families who fled the fumigation are now living in rundown wooden shacks in the town of San Miguel near the Ecuador border. Cecilia, a middle-aged woman who, along with her husband and three children, abandoned their farm in La Dorada in January after it had been fumigated, says, "everything was killed. Maize, yucca, everything." She now sells home-cooked food to travelers crossing the border in a struggle to support her family.

Even the leader of Putumayo's paramilitary forces, Commandante Enrique, admits that "if you go to San Miguel you can find campesinos who don't have food and money because the fumigation was indiscriminate."

The local hospital in La Hormiga has witnessed some of the human health consequences of the fumigation campaign. "I have treated people with skin rashes, stomach aches and diarrhea caused by the fumigation," says Dr. Edgar Perea. "And I have treated five children affected by the fumigation in the past 25 days. I don't know how many the other doctors have treated."

Prior to launching the offensive, the government offered \$1,000 and technical assistance to those willing to switch from coca to alternative crops, along with a promise that their farms would not be fumigated. Some campesinos accepted

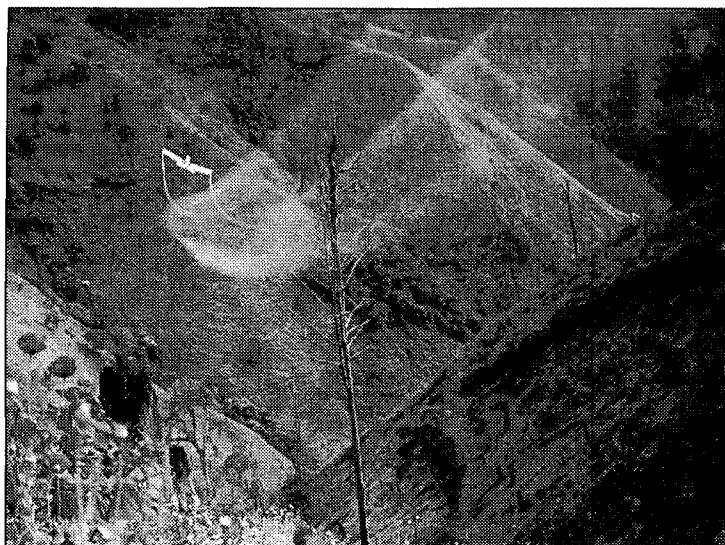
the offer, while others, distrustful of a government that has repeatedly failed to deliver on past promises, steadfastly refused. "Historically, the government has never helped anyone here," one La Hormiga resident explained. "People helped themselves, and with coca the economy is good. Now the government wants to help, but people are afraid it will ruin the economy."

When the eradication campaign began, many of the small farmers who had accepted the government's offer stood by helplessly while the aerial fumigation killed their newly planted crops. But according to Col. Blas Ortiz of the Colombian army's Putumayo-based 24th Brigade, the fumigation campaign only targeted "industrial sized" coca farms of 25 acres or more. Furthermore, Ortiz claims, "One of the techniques used by the big coca growers is to grow two acres of yucca or plantains in the middle of 125 acres of coca. These two acres don't belong to the campesinos, they belong to the big coca grower. They use this strategy to avoid being fumigated."

Ruben Dario Pinzon of the National Plan for Alternative Development (PLANTE), the government agency in charge of the alternative crop program, sympathizes with the campesinos. "Growers financed by PLANTE have been fumigated because they are a small area in the middle of coca growers," he says. "It is impossible to protect them because the pilots can't control exactly where they fumigate. They fumigate the whole area."

The indiscriminate nature of the fumigation campaign has led many to call for a greater emphasis on manual eradication, which would avoid damaging food crops. "PLANTE is fighting to end fumigation in the six municipalities in which we are working," Pinzon says, "so we can start the process of alternative crops and then begin negotiations with other towns."

But most coca farming occurs in remote areas that lack the infrastructure required to transport perishable crops to distant cities and ports. And if the num-



A Colombian crop duster drops herbicide on poppy fields.

JAVIER CASELL/REUTERS

Local officials are now desperately trying to convince Washington and Bogota to permanently suspend the aerial fumigation before there is a further destruction of legal crops and a renewed exodus of people. But their pleas have fallen on deaf ears. The politicians and generals are too busy celebrating the campaign's success and planning future operations. For the campesinos of Putumayo, it is only a matter of time before death once again begins falling from the sky. ■

ber of campesinos turning to alternative crops continues to increase, production will likely surpass local demand and drive prices down. Consequently, impoverished campesinos will face the same economic problems that forced them to turn to coca cultivation in the first place.

When asked if PLANTE intends to help campesinos get their alternative crops to market, Pinzon laments, "At this time it is not possible to propose such an economic plan. It is desirable that the government subsidize some items like they do in the United States and Europe. But in Colombia it's not possible because we do not have the money."

It is the lack of social and economic funding in the U.S. aid package that is criticized by many in Colombia and the international community. Many organizations do not believe coca can be successfully eradicated until more money and resources are used to create viable economic alternatives. The campesino who cultivates coca does not have to be concerned with getting his crop to market before it spoils. The narco-trafficker comes to him. Also, coca is a hardier plant than most legal crops and can reap three or four harvests a year. And if the grower is willing to perform the first step of processing into coca paste, he will be paid more than if he just sold the leaves. The local farmer is not getting rich from this illicit crop, but the \$1,000 a year he can earn from two or three acres of coca cultivation helps prevent his family from going hungry.

Garry M. Leech is the editor of Colombia Report (www.colombiareport.org). Research for this article was funded in part by the Dick Goldensohn Fund (www.dickgoldensohn.org).

Project Censored

There's freedom of speech in Singapore. Just watch what you say.

By G. Pascal Zachary

SINGAPORE—The taxi driver agreed to take me to Hong Lim Park, but he was none too happy when I told him I wished to visit the park's big new attraction: Speaker's Corner.

Modeled after London's famous free-speech gathering place in Hyde Park, Singapore's version, which opened last September, is an attempt by the government to encourage free expression while keeping a clear sense of boundaries. Famously authoritarian, Singapore's paternalistic government realizes that its citizens need to be more outspoken to succeed in the global economy, where outspokenness and rule-breaking often fuel innovation.

My driver is skeptical. If he were to speak his mind in the park, he says, "the police would come to arrest me, call me communist." If the government "wants

free speech," he adds, "they shouldn't put a police station next to Speaker's Corner." Indeed, people must register at the police station before they speak.

Many Singaporeans, like this taxi driver, don't think freer speech is possible here. And foreign human rights activists have dismissed Speaker's Corner as a sham. But interestingly, Singapore's leading dissenters see it as a new way to mount legal protests in a country where the government must essentially approve all public meetings, and critics are routinely silenced by the threat of jail without charge.

To outsiders, Singapore is an Orwellian place, the epitome of state control in the age of cyberspace. But according to James Gomez, the citizenry knows all too well how to police itself. Gomez, 36, argues that the country's repressive government gets too much credit for stifling individuality and criticism. He insists that Singaporeans are to blame as well for their timidity, and that by shedding self-imposed limits they can find a new voice for fruitful political debate.

Gomez's book *Self-Censorship: Singapore's Shame* has won a cult following in the country on the strength of its sober criticism of the national character and its restrained criticism of the ruling People's Action Party (PAP), which has dominated the government since the country's founding in 1965. While concluding that the PAP has created a "censorial political culture" that discourages open debate, he pins much blame for the political sterility of Singapore on its own citizens.

Gomez prefers pushing sound liberal principles rather than scoring political points against an entrenched government. But even this conceptual approach to dissent is risky. Late last year, Gomez began organizing visits to Speaker's Corner. He and a half-dozen others, and sometimes more, would hold forth in the park, one after another. He even had the boldness to describe in a flier publicizing one such

gathering of like-minded thinkers, held on December 10, as a "demonstration."

That day Gomez read aloud a speech by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan. Hardly firebrand stuff, but the Singapore government struck back. In February, Gomez was hauled into a police station and grilled about the event. He was released but warned that he must obtain a permit before any future appearances at Speaker's Corner. Gomez is furious: "We can speak but we can't organize and assemble, so why do we need Speaker's Corner?"

The absurdity of requiring a permit to speak in a park set up as a monument to free speech isn't lost on Singapore's political mandarins. Curiously, the government-controlled daily newspaper, the *Straits Times*, devoted three pages in one edition alone to a discussion of the issues raised by Gomez's action.

Since this is Singapore, Gomez is carefully weighing his next move. On March 27, he returned to Hong Lim Park, disregarding a police warning that he not organize another meeting at Speaker's Corner. About 30 supporters turned out—a lot for Singapore—and Gomez had his say. The police never interfered nor have they bothered him since.

This is a small victory in a cat-and-mouse game between Singaporean dissidents and an edgy government. Gomez says he isn't sure how much further he can push the boundaries at Hong Lim Park, but in any case he is an experimenter: pragmatic out of necessity. His recent experiments in free expression underscore that a peaceful opening up of Singapore—and other Asian authoritarian states—remains possible. But this is hard work. As Gomez has found in unmasking Speaker's Corner, free speech means little without the related right of free assembly. And today this appears to be one right too many for Singapore's insecure rulers. ■

The Horo-Witch Project

A new culture war erupts over reparations ads

By Bill Berkowitz

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA—David Horowitz's new campaign attacking reparations for African-Americans is becoming the right-wing equivalent of the Energizer bunny—it keeps going and going and going. In what began as an effort to place an anti-reparations ad in college newspapers across the country, Horowitz has garnered more media attention for himself than at any other time since the former leftist turned conservative 16 years ago.

Rupert Murdoch's conservative Fox News channel is becoming Horowitz's personal soapbox, dozens of conservative columnists and talk-radio hosts are singing his praises, and several daily newspaper editorial boards have supported him. After the editors of the *Harvard Crimson* refused to run the ad, liberal journalists Anthony Lewis and David Halberstam wrote the student newspaper, expressing their disappointment because they "thought the *Crimson* stood for freedom of the press" and had "the courage" to exercise that right.

Horowitz has become the prince of conservative politics. A well-known leftist in the '60s, he was a Black Panther supporter and editor of *Ramparts* magazine, the premier left-wing publication of the period. (He was also an original sponsor of *In These Times*.) Along with Peter Collier, his longtime writing partner and co-founder of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, Horowitz came out as a Reagan Republican in a 1985 *Washington Post* article. Since then, he has blended Dr. Laura-like pomposity with a knack for self-promotion.

Horowitz's latest stunt began on February 28—the last day of Black History Month—when he approached the University of California at Berkeley's student-run newspaper, *The Daily Californian*, about running the ad. Headlined "Ten Reasons Why



Talk is cheap at Speaker's Corner.

Reparations for Slavery is a Bad Idea—and Racist Too,” the ad lays out Horowitz’s anti-reparations position, plugs his latest book, *The Death of the Civil Rights Movement*, and solicits money for his Los Angeles-based center. According to Media Transparency, a Web site tracking the money behind the right, over the past decade right-wing foundations have ponied up some \$9 million for the center—including more than \$3 million from the Milwaukee-based Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.

At press time, Horowitz had sent ads to 57 college papers—34 had rejected the ad, 14 printed it (three with apologies) and 9 were still undecided. Horowitz is giving those who rejected the first ad an opportunity to rethink their decision, offering them a second ad to use as an op-ed piece.

A week after the ad appeared in Berkeley’s *Daily Californian*, Horowitz (accompanied by campus police and two personal bodyguards) spoke at a gathering sponsored by the Berkeley College Republicans. According to the student newspaper, the sponsors pulled the plug during the question-and-



LONNY SHAVELSON/PICTUREDESK INTERNATIONAL

Security guards lead David Horowitz into a speech at U.C. Berkeley.

answer period when “the crowd became raucous, with yelling and cheering on both sides of the aisle.”

At Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, student editors published the ad in mid-March and the next day discovered that the entire press run had disappeared from campus newspaper racks. Several days later the ad was reprinted and the

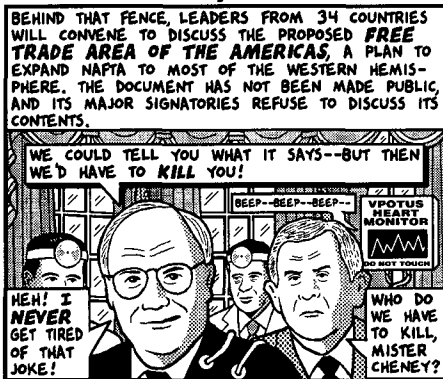
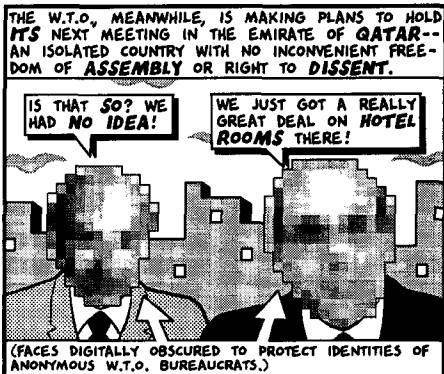
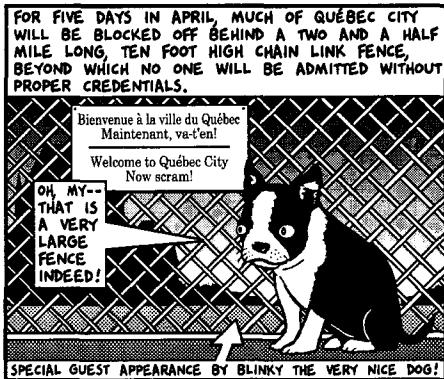
paper delivered with police protection. Interim Brown President Sheila Blumstein told The Associated Press that she supported the decision to run the ad and that the theft of the papers would be investigated.

At the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the *Badger Herald* ran the ad. Editor-in-Chief Julie Bosman explained on NPR’s *Talk of the Nation* that although the advertising department was responsible for the decision, she felt the “content of the ad was well within the discourse of a college paper.” Bosman also said that she had heard that “stacks of papers were stolen and thrown into trash cans on campus.” The paper’s editorial board later refused to publish a counter-ad labeling the Horowitz campaign “racist propaganda.”

These episodes provide a window into one aspect of the political strategy Horowitz elaborates in “The Six Principles of Political War,” a piece posted last August on his Web site (www.frontpagemag.com). First, he says or writes something incendiary about African-Americans. Called on it, criticized and sometimes labeled a racist, Horowitz then cries out that he’s a victim of left-wing censorship, casting himself as a First Amendment martyr. The debate is no longer focused on the merits of the issue—in this case, reparations for African-Americans. Instead Horowitz has successfully turned the entire affair into a self-aggrandizing media blitz,

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



gaining a platform for condemning the bankruptcy of the left, intolerance of student radicals and political correctness on campus. In this case, Horowitz's plan is to build opposition to the reparations movement among black conservatives and his white supporters. By setting off this pre-emptive strike against reparations, he gets to define the issue on his own terms.

Regardless of Horowitz's schemes, the debate over reparations has begun to gain steam around the country. Since 1989, Rep. John Conyers (D-Michigan) has introduced a bill to begin a full congressional examination of the issue. And last June, Rep. Tony Hall (D-Ohio) introduced legislation to formally apologize for the government's role in slavery.

Horowitz's book, *The Art of Political War*, is becoming a valuable organizing tool for right-wing activists across the country. Shawn Steel, a board member for the Study of Popular Culture and the new chairman of the California State GOP, distributed 3,500 copies to party members around the state. Nationally, the conservative Heritage Foundation also distributed more than 2,500 copies. This publication should be a must-read for progressives, too—since it's clear there will be more of these campaigns in the years to come. ■

Altered State

New Mexico passes major drug reform legislation

By Silja J.A. Talvi

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO—Almost two years ago, Republican Gov. Gary Johnson's public statements about the failures of the drug war were met with statewide skepticism and bipartisan outrage. Since then, Johnson—a triathlete quick to note that he is drug- and alcohol-free—has faced what he calls a "political crucifixion" for advocating the decriminalization of marijuana, among other major drug-policy reforms. "I happen to have committed political suicide," Johnson says. "But somehow I've come back from the dead on this issue."

Last year, at the request of the maverick governor, a panel of advisers evaluated New Mexico's drug policy and produced a report which, in turn, inspired several reform bills in the state legislature. On March 21, Johnson announced the passage of four major drug reform laws in New Mexico. The new legislation will restore voting rights to felons after their sentences are completed, and permit pharmacies to sell syringes to drug users without the risk of criminal liability. Another new law will provide civil and criminal immunity to a person who administers, uses or possesses an opioid antagonist—a drug used to counteract a heroin overdose that is illegal in many states. To address the skyrocketing number of women in prison, New Mexico will create a women's drug court offering the option of treatment for the last 18 months of a non-violent offender's sentence.

Numerous other bills—including measures to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana, legalize medical marijuana, reform civil asset forfeiture laws, and provide increased funding for probation and drug treatment—moved rapidly through legislative committees with bipartisan support. But they eventually fell prey to the end-of-session deadline. Taken together, the legislation constitutes "the most comprehensive drug policy reform agenda ever considered by a state legislature," says Katharine Huffman, director of The Lindesmith Center-Drug Policy Foundation's New Mexico chapter.

Johnson, whose second and final term ends in 2002, has insisted that the high cost of incarcerating drug users is a costly and short-sighted solution to what should be considered a public health problem. An avowed admirer of the progressive drug policies of the Netherlands and Switzerland, Johnson believes that New Mexico's approach toward substance abuse is bound to have a "positive impact" on rates of crime, incarceration and the spread of infectious diseases, including HIV and hepatitis C.

With more than 2 million people in prison—a quarter of whom are incarcerated on drug-related charges—Johnson insists that the decriminalization of marijuana and the elimination of mandatory minimums are logical steps forward for the United States, even though most politicians have hesitated to embrace such ideas. The governor hopes New Mexico's bold drug policy reform will influence other states to do the same. "There's no question that this issue is going to be a tipping point," he says.

In New Mexico, support for drug reform is running high: Two-thirds of New Mexicans now support eliminating criminal penalties for possession of



"This issue is going to be a tipping point," says New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson

small amounts of marijuana and providing treatment, not incarceration, for users of harder drugs. Last November, five states passed some form of drug policy reform. California's Proposition 36 mandates treatment, instead of incarceration, for first- and second-time drug offenders.

"Rather than continuing with the fiction that we can create a drug-free society, the alternative approach is to acknowledge that drugs are here to stay," says Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of The Lindesmith Center. "We should focus instead on reducing the death, disease, crime and suffering associated with drugs and our failed prohibitionist policies." ■

Taxes for Terrorists?

Bush's "faith-based" initiative has been running into problems. Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell expressed alarm about just who might get funding: The Nation of Islam? The Church of Scientology? The Hare Krishnas? Heaven forbid. Other church groups are dubious about the possible strings attached to government cash.

But liberals have been quiet, or worse. Columnist Ellen Goodman and law professor David Cole (writing in the *New York Times*) have argued that the needs are so great that religious outfits should be "given a chance." Don't listen to them. Progressives should unite to kill the Bush plan dead. The program is not only a gift to those keen on privatizing public jobs and a strike against the secular state, but it could also end up subsidizing the violent fringe of the religious right.

Jerry Reiter is a former Christian Coalition activist and insider at Operation Rescue, the militant anti-abortion group that pioneered blocking access to abortion clinic doors. Reiter, who wrote of his experiences on the fringes of the anti-abortion movement in *Live from the Gates of Hell* and now works for the *American Humanist*, says that it's easy for religious extremists to set up front groups that look like charities. They do it all the time.

Legitimate-looking social service front groups are a good way to raise cash, Reiter says. They're called "parachurch ministries," and they've been a staple of the religious scene for years. Reiter says he collected thousands of dollars at weekly Christian Coalition rallies for local causes. But he believes Operation Rescue (which ran its campaign from the Buffalo Christian Coalition's basement) was at least partially funded by the Christian Coalition's collection cash.

At the national level, Operation Rescue ran an adoption service supported by charitable donations. Did Operation Rescue raise money for its adoption service that actually went to fund the blockade movement? It's like-

ly, Reiter says, but there's no way to know for sure.

Then there is John Burt, a former Ku Klux Klansman turned anti-abortion radical, who ran Our Father's House, a home for unwed mothers that Reiter visited in Pensacola, Florida. Burt, who led the



blockade movement in Pensacola, would get his clients onto welfare, "then he'd send out solicitations" for money to care for the unwed mothers and their "rescued" kids, Reiter says. In a bucket in the pantry, Burt kept a 20-week-old aborted fetus in formaldehyde (for use as a "counseling tool," he told a journalist). It was at Our Father's House that Michael Griffin, a volunteer, was shown his first video of aborted fetuses. After he was convicted in 1993 of murdering Dr. David Gunn outside a nearby Pensacola women's clinic, Griffin claimed he'd been brainwashed by Burt.

Among those who praised Bush's faith-based initiative this January was Reiter's former pastor, Rob Schenck, the man who first introduced him to the Christian Coalition, Operation Rescue and the anti-abortion underground. "President Bush is to be commended in the highest possible way," Schenck told CBS *This Morning* on January 25. "Religiously based social programs typically have the highest success rates, lowest costs and most personally interested staff."

In a press release, Schenck, who attended the National Prayer Breakfast to commend the Bush plan, described himself as an evangelical minister and former executive director of Teen Challenge, a church-spon-

sored rehabilitation program for troubled youth and a favorite Bush charity. With his twin brother Paul, Schenck founded Operation Serve, something he calls "a humanitarian relief agency that deploys medical and dental volunteers to serve the poor" and Hearts for the Homeless, "a mobile advocacy program for indigent women, children and men."

Schenck left some things off his resumé. At the 1992 Democratic Convention, Schenck was arrested and detained by the Secret Service for rushing Bill Clinton with a dead fetus in his hands, screaming about abortion. He and his brother were the people who first invited Operation Rescue to Buffalo to picket Dr. Barnett Slepian, a local abortion provider. For years, they marched outside Slepian's home and office with threatening signs, some of which called the doctor "pig." In 1998, Slepian was shot dead at his home. His alleged murderer, James Kopp, was arrested in France in late March.

Bush's faith-based initiative could end up subsidizing anti-abortion extremists.

Now the brothers say that killing is a sin. They both left Operation Rescue after serving short prison sentences for lying in federal court, and Schenck went on to work for Teen Challenge in New York.

Bush's initiative should raise hackles, Reiter says, and not just among secular constitutionalists or those concerned about government interference with the church. Anyone who pays taxes should worry because cash for social services provided by the likes of the Schencks may not suit any social agenda except the advancement of extreme, supremacist views. "Even if in the main, the money goes to good causes," he says. "there is a clear and present danger that some of it will go to groups closely affiliated with, if not controlled by, terrorists." ■

Health Care Privacy for Sale

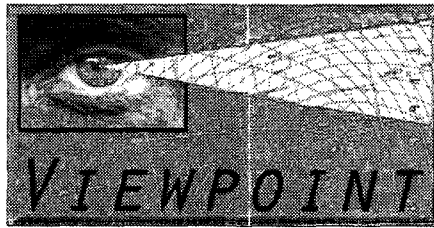
In December, President Clinton announced what were supposed to be final regulations governing medical privacy. The regulations contained two new policies: one good, one bad. The good policy: The regs require HMOs to get patient consent before seizing their medical records. The bad policy: The regs permit doctors, hospitals, pharmacists and other providers of health care to deliver patient records to marketers without patient consent. Imagine getting, for example, a letter that says in so many words, "We know you have hemorrhoids and are depressed. We urge you to buy Drug X for your hemorrhoids and Drug Y for your depression." It's legal under the new regs.

Guess which one of these policies is now under ferocious assault? Yup, the one requiring HMOs to get patient consent before reading patient medical records. Thanks to lobbying by the HMO and hospital industries, Tommy Thompson, the new Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), announced in February that he will consider rewriting the Clinton privacy rules. House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas also sent a letter on March 5 to Secretary Thompson, urging him to block implementation of the Clinton rules.

Clinton's privacy regs were a surprise because his administration had endorsed the opposite policies in the draft regs announced back in October 1999 (see "Invasion of Privacy," August 21, 2000). The draft regs let HMOs rifle through patient files without consent, but denied that privilege to businesses that sought patient files merely for marketing purposes. Clinton changed the first rule after pressure from the AMA, the American Psychiatric Association and more than 52,000 letters from doctors and patients. But while Clinton hailed his new position on the issue of HMOs reading medical records, he concealed his 180 on the question of marketing.

After declaring that the new regs "make medical records easier to see for those who should see them, and much

harder to see for those who shouldn't," Clinton added: "There's something else that's really bothered me too, for years, and that is that private companies should not be able to get hold of the most sensitive medical information for marketing purposes. ... Recently, expect-



tant mothers who haven't even told their friends the good news are finding sales letters for baby products in their mailboxes. That's also wrong. And under these new rules, it will also be illegal."

But under those new rules, it's not illegal. The only option patients have under the new regulations is to tell marketers, after the marketer has solicited the patient, that they do not want their name on the marketer's solicitation list. Of course, once the marketer has solicited the patient, the damage to privacy has already been done—the patient's medical information has already been seen by unwelcome third parties.

Meanwhile, the spinmeisters for the HMO industry are claiming that the patient-consent requirement will raise premiums and damage the alleged ability of HMOs to improve medical care. "The regs will result in more paperwork and higher copayments and premiums," declared Mary Grealy, president of the Healthcare Leadership Council, a trade group representing health insurance companies, hospital chains and drug companies. At a press conference on December 20, Karen Ignagni, president and CEO of the American Association of Health Plans (AAHP), the HMO industry's trade group, claimed the consent requirement would "unintentionally jeopardize care" by making it harder for HMOs to do those wonderful disease-

prevention activities they claim to do so well, such as reminding women to have a mammogram.

Ignagni did not explain why it should be so difficult for doctors to get their patients to give them permission to send their names to an HMO for the limited and benign purpose of sending them reminder letters when it's time to have a mammogram or an immunization. Most patients would probably agree to such a limited invasion of their privacy. The real reason the HMO industry is upset with the patient-consent requirement is that HMOs want to continue their habit of commandeering patient files to curtail the use of medical services, and the industry knows that the patient-consent requirement will make this habit difficult to sustain.

The new administration's decision to reconsider the Clinton privacy regs would be encouraging if this administration had shown some genuine interest in patient privacy and a lot less interest in groveling before the HMOs. But Thompson is reviewing the regs because the HMO industry asked him to. In a speech on February 26 to repre-

Secretary Thompson is reviewing the regs because the HMOs asked him to.

sentatives of the AAHP, Thompson regurgitated Ignagni's arguments. "Our greatest concern is that these regulations not unwittingly block needed care," he said solemnly.

If Thompson, or ultimately Congress, revises the regs to eliminate the requirement that HMOs get patient consent, but maintains the right of marketers to see records without consent, we will then have the worst of all possible worlds—no patient control over who sees our records and the formal endorsement of this awful status quo by the federal government. ■

Kip Sullivan sits on the steering committee of the Health Care Campaign of Minnesota.

Now or Never

What's an environmentalist to do?

By Bill McKibben

When global warming first emerged as a potential crisis in the late '80s, one academic analyst called it "the public policy problem from hell." The years since have only proven him more astute—15 years into our understanding of climate change, we have yet to figure out how we're going to tackle it. And environmentalists are just as clueless as anyone else: Do we need to work on lifestyles or on lobbying, on politics or on photovoltaics? And is there a difference? How well we handle global warming will determine what kind of century we inhabit—and indeed what kind of planet we leave behind to everyone and everything that follows us down into geologic time. It is the environmental question, the one that cuts closest to home and also floats off most easily into the abstract. So far it has been the ultimate "can't get there from here" problem, but the time has come to draw a roadmap—one that may help us deal with the handful of other issues on the list of real, world-shattering problems.

The first thing to know about global warming is this: The science is sound. In 1988, when scientists first testified before Congress about the potential for rapid and destabilizing climate change, they were still describing a hypothesis. It went like this: Every time human beings burn coal, gas, oil, wood or any other carbon-based fuel, they emit large quantities of carbon dioxide. (A car emits its own weight in carbon annually if you drive it the average American distance.) This carbon dioxide accumulates in the atmosphere. It's not a nor-

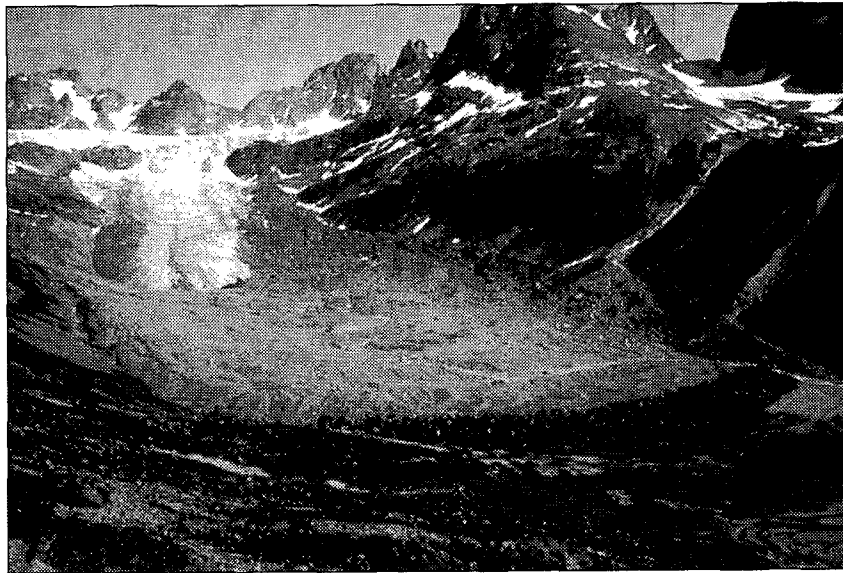
mal pollutant—it doesn't poison you, or change the color of the sunset. But it does have one interesting property: Its molecular structure traps heat near the surface of the planet that would otherwise radiate back out to space. It acts like the panes of glass on a greenhouse.

The hypothesis was that we were putting enough carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to make a difference. The doubters said no—that the earth would compensate for any extra carbon by forming extra clouds and cooling the planet, or through some other feedback mechanism. And so, as

scientists will, they went at it. For five years—lavishly funded by governments that wanted to fund research instead of making politically unpopular changes—scientists produced paper after paper. They studied glacial cores and tree rings and old pollen sediments in lake beds to understand past climates; they took temperature measurements on the surface and from space; they refined their computer models and ran them backward in time to

see if they worked. By 1995 they had reached a conclusion. That year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group of all the world's climatologists assembled under the auspices of the United Nations, announced that human beings were indeed heating up the planet.

The scientists kept up the pace of their research for the next five years, and in the past five months have published a series of massive updates to their findings. These results are uniformly grimmer than even five years before. They include:



Glaciers like this one in Greenland are retreating at an unprecedented rate.

- The prediction that humans will likely heat the planet 4 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit in this century, twice as much as earlier forecast, taking global temperatures to a level not seen in millions of years, and never before in human history.
- The worst-case possibility that we will raise the temperature by as much as 11 degrees Fahrenheit, a true science-fiction scenario that no one had seriously envisaged before.
- The near certainty that these temperature increases will lead to rises in sea level of at least a couple of feet.
- The well-documented fear that disease will spread quickly as vectors like mosquitoes expand their range to places that used to be too cool for their survival.

But it isn't just the scientists who are hard at work on this issue. For the past five years, it's almost as if the planet itself has been peer-reviewing their work. We've had the warmest years on record—including 1998, which was warmer than any year for which records exist. And those hot years have shown what even small changes in temperature—barely a degree Fahrenheit averaged globally—can do to the earth's systems.

Consider hydrology, for instance. Warm air holds more water vapor than cold air, so there is an increase in evaporation in dry areas, and hence more drought—something that has been documented on every continent. Once that water is in the atmosphere, it's going to come down somewhere—and indeed we have seen the most dramatic flooding ever recorded in recent years. In 1998, 300 million humans, one in 20 of us, had to leave their homes for a week, a month, a year, forever because of rising waters.

Or look at the planet's cryosphere, its frozen places. Every alpine glacier is in retreat; the snows of Kilimanjaro will have vanished by 2015; and the Arctic ice cap is thinning fast—data collected by U.S. and Soviet nuclear submarines show that it is almost half gone compared with just four decades ago.

In other words, human beings are changing the planet more fundamentally in the course of a couple of decades than in all the time since we climbed down from the trees and began making clever use of our opposable thumbs. There's never been anything like this.

Yet to judge from the political response, this issue ranks well below, say, the estate tax as a cause for alarm and worry. In 1988, there was enough public outcry that George Bush the Elder promised to combat "the greenhouse effect with the White House

effect." In 1992, Bill Clinton promised that Americans would emit no more carbon dioxide by 2000 than they had in 1990—and that his administration would do the work of starting to turn around our ocean liner of an economy, laying the foundation for the transition to a world of renewable energy.

That didn't happen, of course. Fixated on the economy, Clinton and Gore presided over a decade when Americans, who already emitted a quarter of the world's carbon dioxide, actually managed to increase their total output by 12 percent. Now we have a president who seems unsure whether global warming is real, and far more concerned with increasing power production than with worrying

about trifles like the collapse of the globe's terrestrial systems. In November, the hope of global controls on carbon dioxide production essentially collapsed at an international conference in the Hague, when the United States refused to make even modest concessions on its use of fossil fuels, and the rest of the world finally walked away from the table in disgust.

In the face of all this, what is an environmentalist to do? The normal answer, when you're mounting a campaign, is to look for self-interest, to scare people by saying what will hap-

The first thing to know about global warming is this: The science is sound.

Green Heroes

Buffalo Field Campaign West Yellowstone, Montana

A century ago, the U.S. government nearly exterminated the American buffalo, an animal that once thundered across the Plains 60 million strong. By 1900, the herds of the Plains had completely disappeared. Yellowstone National Park sheltered the remaining 23 wild buffalo.

Now the government is hunting buffalo again—this time spooked by a brucellosis, a reproductive disease that has yet to kill a wild animal. Livestock interests fear that wild buffalo could transmit brucellosis to their cattle, even though no such case has ever been reported.

Every winter, Yellowstone's buffalo herd—which now numbers nearly 3,500—migrates down from the park to forage and escape heavy snowfall. When they cross the park border, officials from Montana Department of Livestock capture and kill the animals. In the winter of 1997, 1,100 Yellowstone buffalo were slaughtered.

That year, the Buffalo Field Campaign formed to prevent another slaughter. Every winter, volunteers

hunker down at the campaign's back-country cabin and head out at dawn on daily ski patrols to track the buffalo. If

necessary, volunteers are trained in direct action to stop the animals from being captured. During BFC's first winter patrol, only 11 buffalo were killed. This year, according to BFC volunteer Pete Leusch, 14 have been captured; five of them have been killed.

BFC is supported by many local residents, who often join them for patrols and bring out hot drinks and food to the cabin. "The reckless and vindictive slaughter of the last wild American buffalo is a symptom of the disease that plagues our nation," Leusch says. "The Buffalo Field Campaign is taking a nonviolent stand against this injustice, and we are affecting change."

Kristin Kolb-Angelbeck

For more information write:
P.O. Box 957
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
or visit: www.wildrockies.org/buffalo



pen to us if we don't do something: all the birds will die, the canyon will disappear beneath a reservoir, we will choke to death on smog.

But in the case of global warming, those kind of answers don't exactly do the trick, at least in the timeframe we're discussing. At this latitude, climate change will creep up on us. Severe storms have already grown more frequent and more damaging. The seasons are less steady in their progression. Some agriculture is less reliable.

But face it: Our economy is so enormous that it handles those kinds of changes in stride. Economists who work on this stuff talk about how it will shave a percentage or two off GNP over the next few decades—not enough to notice in the kind of generalized economic boom they describe. And most of us live lives so divorced from the natural world

that we hardly notice the changes anyway. Hotter? Turn up the air conditioning. Stormier? Well, an enormous percentage of Americans commute from remote-controlled garage

to office parking garage—they may have gone the last year without getting good and wet in a rainstorm. By the time the magnitude of the change is truly in our faces, it will be too late to do much about it: There's such a lag time with carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that we need to be making the switch to solar and wind and

hydrogen right about now. Yesterday, in fact.

So maybe we should think of global warming in a different way—as the great moral crisis of our moment, the equivalent in our time of the civil rights movement of the '60s.

Why a moral question? In the first place, because we've never figured out a more effective way to screw the marginalized and poor of this planet. Having taken their dignity, their resources and their freedom under a variety of other schemes, we now are taking the very physical stability on which they depend for the most bottom-line of existences.

Our economy can absorb these changes for a while, but for a moment consider Bangladesh. A river delta that houses 130 million souls in an area the size of Wisconsin, Bangladesh actually manages food self-sufficiency most years. But in 1998, the sea level in the Bay of Bengal was higher than normal, just the sort of thing we can expect to become more frequent and severe. The waters sweeping down the Ganges and the Brahmaputra from the Himalayas could not drain easily into the ocean—they backed up across the country, forcing most of its inhabitants to spend three months in thigh-deep water. The fall rice crop didn't get planted. We've seen this same kind of disaster in the last few years in Mozambique or Honduras or Venezuela or any of a dozen other wretched spots.

And a moral crisis, too, if you place any value on the rest of creation. Coral reef researchers indicate that these spectacularly intricate ecosystems are also spectacularly vulnerable—rising water temperatures will likely bleach them to extinction by mid-century. In the Arctic, polar bears are 20 percent scrawnier than they were a decade ago: As pack ice melts, so does the opportunity for hunting seals. All in all, this century seems poised to see extinctions at a

There's such a lag time with carbon dioxide that we need to make ...

Green Heroes

Ricardo Navarro

Center for Appropriate Technology
San Salvador, El Salvador

El Salvador's 12-year civil war left its land and water in ruins. As the country struggles to repair its economy and progress to the level of its Central American neighbors, rapid development and population growth have cut down what trees were left in this once lush country, poisoned the groundwater and turned cities into heaps of trash. El Salvador is now the most deforested country in Latin America.

Engineer Ricardo Navarro founded the Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology (CESTA) in 1980 to educate and empower local citizens to think and act sustainably. "Since then CESTA has been the main environmental institution in the country," Navarro told *In These Times*, "with many projects in urban and rural areas."

CESTA is the largest nonprofit in El Salvador. "We have campaigns, workshops and projects on water protection, solar energy, sustainable management of solid wastes, climate change, protection of sea turtles, medicinal plant use and proper nutrition," Navarro says. "We also teach techniques to stop soil erosion and deforestation."

In one of CESTA's most innovative programs, members teach young people to build and repair bicycles and wheelchairs for the poor. CESTA staff also design and make pedal-powered composting latrines, water pumps and corn grinders. Members

ride bicycle carts around San Salvador collecting trash. Many graduates of the program have started their own small businesses around such bicycle technology.

In the Guazapa region, which was razed by napalm bombs in the '80s, CESTA is creating a "Forest of Reconciliation" commemorating the 75,000 people who died during the war. So far, 65,000 fruit and medicinal trees have been planted. Navarro has received several death threats from the remnants of El Salvador's right-wing death squads for such activity. In 1995, Navarro won the prestigious Goldman Prize, a \$125,000 cash award given to six outstanding environmentalists each year.



As the new chairman of Friends of the Earth International, Navarro has been a vocal critic of globalization. He is advocating reparations for Latin American countries from the United States and other rich northern countries for using up the region's rich natural resources. "It's important to always consider social and environmental issues combined," Navarro says, "because in Third World countries, the exploitation of resources is often linked to issues of wealth and poverty, and violations of human rights." **K.K.A.**

For more information write:
Apartado 3065, 33 Calle Puniente 316
San Salvador, El Salvador
or visit: www.tao.ca/~cesta

rate not observed since the last big asteroid slammed into the planet. But this time the asteroid is us.

A moral question, finally, if you think we owe any debt to the future. No one ever has figured out a more thorough-going way to stripmine the present and degrade what comes after. Forget the seventh generation—we're talking 70th generation, and 700th. All the people that will ever be related to you. Ever. No generation yet to come will ever forget us—we are the ones present at the moment when the temperature starts to spike, and so far we have not reacted. If it had been done to us, we would loathe the generation that did it, precisely as we will one day be loathed.

But trying to make a moral campaign is no easy task. In most moral crises, there is a villain—some person or class or institution that must be overcome. Once they're identified, the battle can commence. But you can't really get angry at carbon dioxide, and the people responsible for its production are, well, us. So perhaps we need some symbols to get us started, some places to sharpen the debate and rally ourselves to action. There are plenty to choose from: our taste for ever bigger houses and the heating and cooling bills that come with them; our penchant for jumping on airplanes at the drop of a hat; and so on. But if you wanted one glaring example of our lack of balance, you could do worse than point the finger at sport utility vehicles.

SUVs are more than mere symbol. They are a major part of the problem—one reason we emit so much more carbon dioxide now than we did a decade ago is because our fleet of cars and trucks actually has gotten steadily less fuel efficient for the past 10 years. If you switched today from the average American car to a big SUV, and drove it for just one year, the difference in carbon dioxide that you produced would be the equivalent of opening your refrigerator door and then forgetting to close it for six years. SUVs essentially are machines for burning fossil fuel that just happen to also move you and your stuff around.

But what makes them such a perfect symbol is the brute fact that they are simply unnecessary. Go to the parking lot of the nearest suburban supermarket and look around: the only conclusion you can draw is that to reach the grocery, people must drive through three or four raging rivers and up the side of a trackless canyon. These are semi-mili-

... the switch to solar and wind and hydrogen right about now. Yesterday, in fact.

tary machines (some, like the Hummer, are not semi at all), Brinks trucks on a slight diet. They don't keep their occupants safer, they do wreck whatever they plow into—they are the perfect metaphor for a heedless, super-sized society. And a gullible one, which has been sold on these vast vehicles partly by the promise that they somehow allow us to commune with nature.

That's why we need a much broader politics than the White House-lobbying that's occupied the big enviros for the past decade, or the mass-market mailing that has been their stock in trade for the past quarter century. We need to take all the brilliant and energetic strategies of local grassroots groups fighting dumps and cleaning up rivers, and we need to make those tactics national and international. So that's why some pastors are starting to talk with their congregations about what car they're going to buy, and why some college seniors are passing around petitions pledging to stay

Green Heroes

Vera Mischenko

Ecojuris

Moscow

Russia is hardly known for its stellar environmental record. From the moment Vladimir Putin took office, the Russian president has taken deep pleasure in gutting any environmental program he can lay his hands on.

In May 2000, Putin dissolved the Russian equivalents of the Environmental Protection Agency (known as the Committee on Environmental Protection) and the Forest Service, which had created pesky obstacles for oil companies and other polluting industries. Three months later, the Duma threw out a stack of petitions with 2.5 million signatures and approved a plan to import the world's nuclear waste. What's more, in the past few years, many prominent Russian greens have been censored by the government, harassed by the secret police and even imprisoned on charges of treason.

That hasn't stopped Vera Mischenko, the country's most accomplished environmental lawyer. In 1991, as the country was emerging from the shambles of the Soviet Union, Mischenko founded Ecojuris, Russia's first public-interest environmental law firm. Since then, Mischenko has won numerous Supreme Court decisions bolstering Russia's environmental laws.

Mischenko has steadfastly pursued the world's most rapacious polluters: multinational oil companies. In her most famous case, Mischenko sued the government when former Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin ignored the recommendations of the Committee on Environmental Protection and approved an Exxon proposal to drill for oil in the Russian Far East. The company planned to dump toxic



waste from the oil extraction in the Sea of Okhotsk. In 1999, Mischenko won the case, making it the first time Russian environmental law was applied to a multinational corporation. Last year, she won the Goldman Prize.

Ecojuris is now attempting to overturn Putin's decree abolishing the Forest Service and the Committee on Environmental Protection. Meanwhile, the government endlessly needles the group with charges of tax evasion. This warrants audits, which gives the government access to confidential information about Ecojuris' members—and serves as a reconnaissance mission for big polluters. K.K.A.

For more information write:
P.O. Box 172, Moscow 103009, Russia
or visit: www.glasnet.ru/~ecojuris

away from the Ford Explorers and Excursions and Extraneouses, and why some few auto dealers have begun to notice informational picketers outside on Saturday mornings urging their customers to think about gas mileage when they go inside.

The point is not that by themselves such actions—any individual actions—will make any real dent in the production of carbon dioxide pouring into our atmosphere. Even if you got 10 percent of Americans really committed to changing energy use, their solar homes wouldn't make much of a dent in our national totals. But 10 percent would be enough to change the politics of the issue, to insure the passage of the laws that would cause us all to shift our habits. And so we need to begin to take an issue that is now the province

of technicians and turn it into a political issue—just as bus boycotts began to take the issue of race and make it public, forcing the system to respond. That response is likely to be ugly—there are huge companies with a lot to lose, and many people so tied in to their current ways of life that advocating change smacks of subversion. But this has to become a political issue—and fast. The only way that may happen, short of a hideous drought or monster flood, is if it becomes a personal issue first. ■

Bill McKibben is an environmentalist and former staff writer for *The New Yorker* whose work has appeared in *Outside*, *Rolling Stone*, *Harper's* and many other publications. He is the author of *The End of Nature* and *Long Distance*.

10 Facts About SUVs

- Americans bought 2.8 million SUVs as of November 2000—17 percent of all vehicles sold last year.
- The Ford Excursion, at 7,600 pounds, seats nine, gets 12.5 miles per gallon and weighs the equivalent of three Honda Civics. In its lifetime, a Honda Civic emits 40 tons of carbon dioxide. A Ford Excursion 134 tons.
- Crashes between a car and an SUV killed 5,447 people last year. That's over 1,000 more people killed than in crashes involving two cars, despite the fact that car-to-car accidents are more common than car-to-SUV accidents and that there are twice as many cars as SUVs on the road.
- The fuel-economy average for both cars and trucks is at its lowest point since 1980.
- Federal law allows SUVs, which are classified as light trucks, to emit 30 percent more carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons and 75 percent more nitrogen oxides than passenger cars.
- Federal law permits SUVs to waste 33 percent more gasoline than passenger cars.
- SUVs spew out 43 percent more global-warming pollutants and 47 percent more air pollution than an average car.
- Cars and light trucks are a major source of global warming, as each gallon of gasoline pumps 28 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

- Driving an SUV that gets 13 miles per gallon rather than an average car for a year wastes more energy than leaving your bathroom light burning for 30 years or your color television turned on for 28 years.
- America's cars and light trucks alone produce nearly 20 percent of U.S. carbon dioxide pollution—more carbon dioxide than all but four countries worldwide.

SUV Web Sites

www.toowarm.org is the Web site of the Sierra Club's Global Warming and Energy Campaign, which is working to toughen fuel-economy standards for all motor vehicles.

www.suv.org is headquarters of Friends of the Earth's Roadhog Reduction Campaign.

changingtheclimate.com celebrates taking direct action against SUVs by tagging them with bumper stickers that read, "I'm Changing the Climate! Ask Me How."

www.baaction.org/SUVticket lets you print out an "SUV driving ticket" that can then be placed on the windows of SUVs.

www.ucsusa.org is where you will find the Union of Concerned Scientists, a group that tells citizens, "The choice of vehicle that you drive has a greater effect on the environment than any other

choice you make as a consumer."

poseur.4x4.org is a site chock full of SUV satire and humor aimed at "SUV poseurs," the 90 percent of SUV owners who never drive off road.



The Myth of Living Safely in a Toxic World

By Sandra Steingraber

In the spring of 1997, after four years of research and writing, I published *Living Downstream*, a book that explored the relationship between human cancer and environmental contamination. Soon after, I was sent by my publisher on a two-week book tour that lasted a year and a half. It finally ended in September 1998 when I gave my last phone interview while sitting on a towel: I was in labor with my first child, and my water had just broken. I canceled an appearance in Boston that was scheduled for later that evening and headed to the hospital to give birth. Then I went on a self-declared maternity leave.

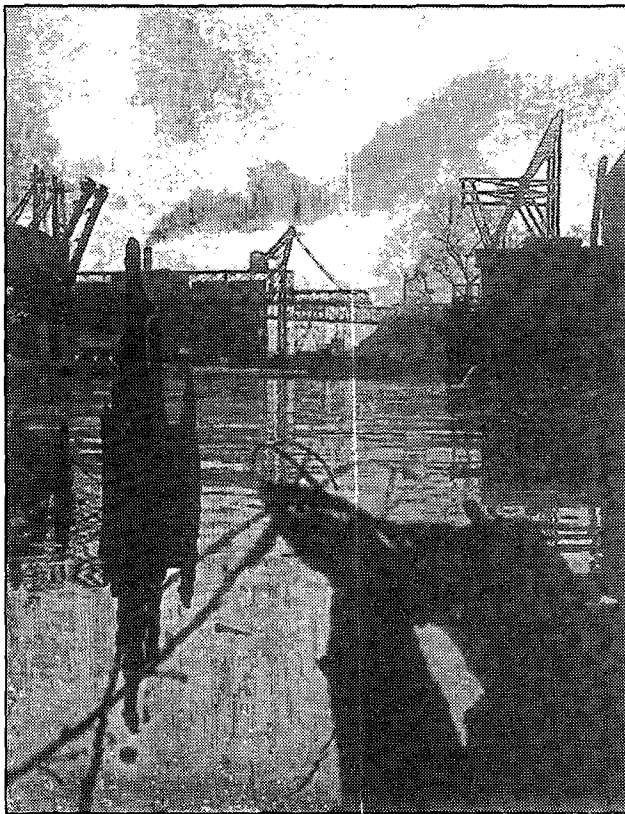
The 18 months I spent on the road with *Living Downstream* formed an amazing journey. It was an odyssey that took me not only to bookstores, radio studios and the sets of Hollywood talk shows, but to medical schools, college campuses, public libraries, church basements, union meeting halls, the floors of various state legislatures and the headquarters of the Environmental Protection Agency. I met with university presidents, ministers, rabbis, pediatric oncologists, breast cancer activists, government scientists, business leaders and elected officials—but mostly I talked with a lot of plain, ordinary folks. I spoke with mothers of children with

brain tumors who lived near Superfund sites; Montana wheat farmers worried that herbicides had something to do with their high rates of lymphoma; student athletes curious about

the pesticides used on the fields where they practiced; wealthy retirees wondering about the chemicals sprayed on their beloved golf courses; native women in Alaska who live near old military installations that leak PCBs; and sheep farmers in Ireland who suspected that insecticides were poisoning their drinking water.

In all these conversations, public and private, I became impressed with how deeply citizens are concerned with the question of how human health is connected to the health of our planet. The subject of my book was clearly a topic on a lot of people's minds. On the other hand, I became equally impressed at the inability of many of my readers to imagine themselves taking action to redress their situation. Even among those wholly convinced that toxic chemicals were contributing to the growing burden of cancer and birth defects in

their communities, few seemed to believe it was possible to bring about an end to their production, use and disposal. Among the few who did, fewer still could imagine what they themselves could do to bring about such a change. It was as



though the presence of harmful chemicals in our air, food, water and bodies was an immutable fact of the human condition and not the result of short-sighted human decisions that could be modified or radically altered. "It's just all so depressing," many would sigh as I signed their books.

I didn't know how to rescue my audiences from their own fatalistic thinking, and its manifestation during our discussions frustrated me. Perhaps because I'm a cancer survivor myself—I was diagnosed with bladder cancer at the age of 20—I view despair as a waste of time. Cancer patients learn to have hope in desperate circumstances, and we don't tend to surrender when the odds are stacked against us. If we could just bring this same damn-the-torpedoes attitude to our political lives, I thought, we would be a powerful

force to reckon with. In this, I tend to side with my Canadian friend, the children's singer Raffi, who argues that pessimism—with its smug presumption that solutions to our

"It's just all so depressing," many readers would sigh. But despair is a waste of time.

current predicament do not exist and cannot possibly lie just ahead of us—is a form of arrogance. "No new paradigm has ever sprung from the cynicism of arrested imagination," writes Raffi in his autobiography.

But I also began to see that another obstacle was preventing my readers from finding the courage to act on their convictions. I call it the myth of living safely in a toxic world.

It works like this. Environmental education in this country tends to focus on individual actions. From Earth Day pamphlets to college environmental science textbooks, we are

exhorted to recycle, compost our food scraps, turn off the tap while brushing our teeth, and insulate our attics. If we are interested in protecting our own health against a toxic onslaught, we might be advised, say, to air out our freshly dry-cleaned suits before hanging them in the closet, or give up dry-cleaning altogether. We are not told how we might collectively persuade the dry-cleaning industry to switch over to non-toxic, wet-cleaning technology. (The dry-cleaning solvent perchloroethylene is a suspected carcinogen and a common contaminant of drinking water. In Ithaca, New York, where I live, the headlines this morning announce a final plan for remediating the contaminated soil and groundwater at one local dry-cleaning shop; the problem was first discovered 10 years earlier. Such stories are replicated across the United States.)

Or consider the widespread contamination of ocean fish with mercury, which is now widely acknowledged as a threat to public health. The official response of our state and federal governments has been to warn the most vulnerable among us—pregnant and nursing mothers—to restrict their consumption of fish. Meanwhile, the industries responsible for creating the problem—coal-burning power plants, for example—are not warned to restrict their emissions of mercury. (OK, as of January 2001 they have been so warned, but electric utilities will not be forced to do anything about it until 2007, which leaves all of us having babies now with no other choice than to forgo tuna sandwiches in order to protect the brains of our unborn children.)

Green Heroes

M.C. Mehta

**Indian Council for Enviro-legal Action
New Delhi, India**

In January, 30 million Hindus waded into the Ganges River to splash in the waters of immortality. The occasion was Purna Kumbh Mela, a six-week spiritual festival occurring only once every 12 years. But these days, the ritual is a deadly toxic bath. The river now harbors dysentery, hepatitis and cholera—as well as a litany of chemicals—due to a steady stream of raw sewage and industrial pollution flowing into it.

But thanks to the work of M.C. Mehta, India's top environmental lawyer, the Ganges is beginning to run clearer. In 1985, after the river caught fire, shooting flames 20 feet into the air, Mehta sued polluting factories in the Ganges Basin. In an unprecedented decision, 5,000 factories were ordered to install pollution-control devices, and 300 were closed. Still, Mehta has pursued the Ganges case and secured orders for 250 towns to provide adequate sewage systems.

Mehta filed his first environmental lawsuit in 1984 after visiting the Taj Mahal. On his trip, Mehta had noticed the fine stonework was disintegrating due to acid rain and was driven to sue nearby polluting companies. After a decade of legal wrangling, in 1993 the Indian Supreme Court ordered 212 factories closed due to a lack of pollution controls; 300 more were ordered to

upgrade their pollution-control systems. Mehta received the Goldman Prize that year for his work.

More recently, Mehta has won a case making unleaded gasoline available in

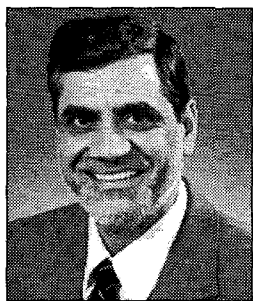
India and secured a ban on intensive shrimp farming. In December, he scored another victory when the Indian Supreme Court ordered 125,000 polluting factories in the New Delhi area closed due to pollution violations; the Indian capital is considered one of the world's five most-polluted cities.

Currently his organization, the Indian Council for Enviro-legal Action, is focusing on a public awareness campaign concerning the mining and manufacture of asbestos in India. Mehta also wants India to establish a system of environmental courts.

Mehta now has so many environmental cases in litigation that a courtroom has been set aside every Friday just for his own arguments. According to the Goldman Foundation, "Mehta has single-handedly obtained 40 landmark judgments and numerous orders from the Supreme Court against polluters, a record that may be unequalled by any other environmental lawyer in the world."

K.K.A.

For more information e-mail: mcmeha@unv.ernet.in.



This relentless attention to individual sacrifices seems almost unique to environmental issues. Other human troubles—shootings in schools, intoxicated drivers on the highway, cigarette addiction among teen-agers—are widely understood as political problems requiring political solutions. Thus, a million moms march on Washington to demand changes in handgun regulations, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers pushes for lower legal limits on blood alcohol levels, and tobacco advertising is restricted. We somehow understand that inviting individual citizens to just say no to firearms, liquor and cigarettes isn't the total solution.

In contrast, we pretend as if we can all live safely in a toxic world if we as individual consumers just give up enough stuff: stop eating meat, stop eating fish, stop drinking tap water, stop swimming in chlorinated pools, stop microwaving in plastic, swear off dairy products, remove shoes at the door so as not to track lawn chemicals into the living room, handwash silk blouses rather than drop them off at the dry-cleaners. Or worse yet, we pretend we can shop our way out of the environmental crisis: buy air filters, buy water filters, buy bottled water, buy pesticide-removing soaps for our vegetables, buy vitamin pills loaded with anti-oxidants to undo whatever damage we can't avoid. It's as though we all aspire to become the ecological equivalent of the boy in the bubble. No wonder people feel depressed.

Fortunately—and I do think it is fortunate—few of these lifestyle sacrifices actually offer much real protection for public health. The reason I think this is good news is that the sooner we quit trying to turn our bodies and homes into fortresses against toxic invasions, the sooner we'll realize that we have no choice but to rise up and demand an end to the invasion. The hard fact is that we cannot opt out of the water cycle or the food chain.

Consider drinking water. You might think you can save yourself from exposures to carcinogens in tap water by purchasing bottled water. But the sense of safety offered by bottled water is a mirage. Because the industry is unregulated, there is no telling what's actually in the bottle. It frequently contains trace contaminants. In some cases, it even is tap water. Moreover, it turns out that breathing, not drinking, constitutes our main route of exposure to volatile pollutants in tap water. This is because most of them—solvents, pesticides, by-products of water chlorination—easily

evaporate. As soon as the toilet is flushed or the faucet turned on, these contaminants leave the water and enter the air. A recent study shows that the most efficient way of exposing yourself to chemical contaminants in tap water is to turn on a dishwasher. (This surprises you?) Drink a bottle of French water and then step into the shower for 10 minutes, and you've just received the exposure equivalent of a half-gallon of tap water. In short, we are all obligated to protect public drinking water, with which we enjoy the most intimate of relationships whether we want to or not.

Well, then, I'll just filter all the tap water coming into my house, you might be thinking here. Think again. Even if these gadgets worked perfectly—and they don't—you are faced with changing them every three to six months. You're

Green Heroes

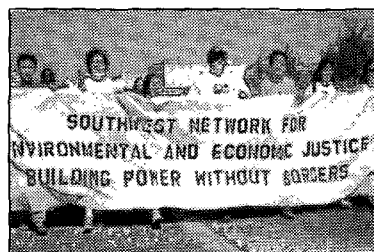
Richard Moore

**Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice
Albuquerque, New Mexico**

The giant environmental groups could learn a few lessons from the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. Operating out of a small office in Albuquerque with a staff of only seven people, SNEEJ has built a formidable network of more than 80 groups with an impressive record of dozens of victories. "From fighting nuclear storage to hazardous waste incinerators to Superfund sites in low-income communities," says Executive Director Richard Moore, "you name it, we've done it."

For the past decade, SNEEJ has served as the central node of organizing activity for low-income, minority communities in the Southwest and Mexican border states. The coalition formed in 1990 to break the isolation afflicting small grassroots groups working on local environmental justice campaigns that were often facing the same problems. SNEEJ provides member groups with workshops on environmental law, organizing, leadership, workers rights and many other nuts-and-bolts tactics. On a higher level, they pressure the federal and state governments to listen to the concerns of working-class minorities. "We are now seeing a population much more educated about environmental problems in low-income communities than when we started," says Moore, a longtime community organizer. "As a result, we see our elected officials asking questions they never did before."

Their bottom-up approach to organizing has worked. Member groups have been particularly successful at making the Environmental



Protection Agency step up enforcement of federal regulations on polluting companies, educating migrant farmworkers about the dangers of pesticides, informing chemical-industry workers of their

health risks, promoting greater workplace safety measures, monitoring workers rights at maquiladoras, and helping independent unions organize along the border. Moore has also served as an adviser to the EPA.

SNEEJ is now targeting the poor environmental and labor records of high-tech companies such as Motorola and Intel, who have moved into Southwestern cities like Phoenix and Albuquerque via huge corporate-welfare deals. To make microchips, high-tech companies consume and contaminate massive quantities of water—a scarce resource in the Southwest. Meanwhile, promises of jobs for local residents have rung hollow. "Intel and other polluters used to view us as a little mosquito biting at their arms," Moore says. "Now they know that the mosquito has the bite of a tiger."

K.K.A.

For more information write:
P.O. Box 7399
Albuquerque, NM 87105
Or e-mail: sneej@flash.net

Green Heroes

Wangari Maathai Green Belt Movement Nairobi, Kenya

Wangari Maathai is not only one of the world's most fearless greens, but also a proud feminist and undaunted opposition leader in her native Kenya. In 1977, she began planting trees with a women's group in an effort to promote sustainable development in rural areas.

These small seedlings grew into Kenya's Green Belt Movement, which now manages 5,000 nurseries of 20 million trees. Green Belt Movement employees act as "foresters without diplomas" handing out trees in rural communities, and educating them about deforestation and soil erosion. For incentive, they pay a fee to families that continue to care for the trees.



Police have frequently harassed, arrested and beaten Maathai for criticizing government corruption and cronyism. In 1997, she ran for president against Daniel Arap Moi, Kenya's long-time dictator. But she received few votes due to unsubstantiated reports that she had withdrawn from the race.

On March 7, Maathai was arrested and jailed again, this time for speaking out against a new government plan to sell off parcels of protected forests. Due to international pressure, she was later released. **K.K.A.**

For more information write:
P.O. Box 67545, Nairobi, Kenya
Or visit: www.geocities.com/gbm0001

left with a spent water filter laden with all the chemical toxics you're determined to keep out of your own body. Now what are you going to do? Throw it in the trash so it can end up leaching in a landfill and contaminating someone else's well? Or become a source of dioxin when it's shoveled into an incinerator and lit on fire? Filters for tap water are nothing more than a way of playing an elaborate shell game with harmful chemicals.

Or consider breast milk, that most perfect form of infant nutrition, with its unsurpassed powers to boost IQ, fend off infectious diseases, encourage the development of the immune system, and prevent diabetes, allergies and obesity. Because it exists at the top of the human food chain, mothers' milk has become the most chemically contaminated of all human foods. It carries concentrations of organochlorine pollutants that are 10 to 20 times higher than cows' milk. Indeed, prevailing levels of chemical contaminants in human milk often exceed legally allowable limits in commercial foodstuffs. Thus, on average, in industrialized countries, breast-fed infants ingest each day 50 times more PCBs, per pound of body weight, than do their parents. The same is true for dioxins.

We cannot ask newborns to become vegetarians. (Soy-based formula is far inferior to human milk. Even as chemically compromised as human breast milk is, breast-fed babies still end up smarter, healthier, less prone to leukemia and exhibiting superior motor skills when compared to their formula-fed counterparts.) We could encourage their mothers to make such changes in their diet, but it turns out that the lifestyle approach to cleaning up breast milk is not very effective. Unless they are strict vegans, vegetarians have just as much dioxin in their fat tissues—from which breast milk is manufactured—as meat-eaters. And even among those who forswear all animal products, veganism must be long standing—commencing a decade or more before a woman becomes pregnant—to result in meaningful declines in breast milk contamination. A Dutch study has compared macrobiotic mothers—whose protein sources come primarily from grains and legumes—with omnivorous mothers.

Green Heroes

Alison Cochran Heartwood Bloomington, Indiana

In 20 years of teaching high school science, Alison Cochran always tried to educate her students about environmental issues. After school, Cochran volunteered with Protect Our Woods, a Bloomington, Indiana group. "I thought it was important to be a role model of active citizenship," she says.

Out of casual meetings in members' homes, Protect Our Woods planned a landmark forest preservation campaign that won major victories in Indiana. Due to their efforts, Hoosier National Forest became the first national forest to prohibit logging, off-road vehicles and mining.

A decade ago, Cochran retired from teaching and helped found Heartwood, one of the nation's most successful forest groups. Heartwood focuses its efforts on preserving the regenerating hardwood forests that once stretched from New England to the Midwest. The group now has 800 members in 18 states.

Heartwood's main campaign is fighting timber sales in national forests. According to the group, \$1

billion in federal taxes is spent every year in support of commercial logging, road building and administrative fees in national forests. "The public is being taken advantage of," says Heidi Bennett, a member of Missouri Heartwood. "With the Forest Service's timber sale program, both money and forest habitat is wasted."

Heartwood litigation has successfully stopped timber sales in one-third of the region's national forests. Cochran says member chapters are currently party to 12 lawsuits concerning timber sales in 10 states throughout the Midwest and Southeast. Missouri Heartwood recently won a long and hard-fought political victory when the state declared a moratorium on wood chip mills, which turn small trees into fodder for paper pulp. The mill business had moved to poor areas of the Ozarks after being kicked out of the Pacific Northwest. **K.K.A.**

For more information write:
P.O. Box 1424, Bloomington, IN 47402
Or visit: www.heartwood.org



The milk of macrobiotic mothers contained less PCBs, but their DDT levels were no different. Moreover, the nursing infants of macrobiotic mothers were still ingesting levels of contaminants that were two to eight times higher than the "allowable" daily intake.

On the other hand, political action works great to purify breast milk. I am pleased to report that average concentrations of certain key breast milk contaminants—DDT, PCBs and dioxins—have declined dramatically since '70s. This improvement is a direct consequence of bans, tighter regulations, incinerator closings, emission reductions, permit denials, right-to-know laws and tougher environmental enforcement. We nursing mothers owe a great debt to thousands of anonymous citizens from all around the world who worked to stop toxic pollution at its source.

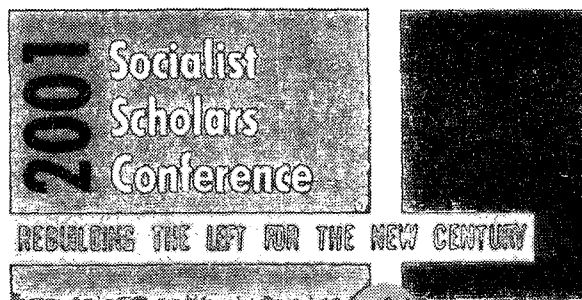
The way we repay this debt—and continue the process of detoxification—is to stop distracting ourselves with individual sacrifices and get involved with the political struggle. Start by finding out what toxic chemicals are being released into your home community by visiting www.scorecard.org and entering your zip code in the empty box. Then take a look at some of the 35,000 pages of internal chemical industry documents that formed the basis of Bill Moyer's expose, *Trade Secrets*, which was recently broadcast on PBS. These are available in the Chemical Industry Archives at www.ewg.org.

Sit for awhile with the new knowledge you gain from these two Web sites and notice what emotions and ideas come up for you. Ask yourself if we have a human rights problem here. Ask yourself how other human rights activists you admire once prevailed against formidable opponents—how women won the right to vote, how abolitionists succeeded in divorcing our economy from slave labor, how workers won the right to a weekend. I think you will find depression and cynicism soon yielding to inspiration and courage. ■

On the faculty of Cornell University, Sandra Steingraber lives in Ithaca, New York, with her husband, Jeff de Castro, and their breast-feeding, two-year-old daughter, Faith. Her new book, Having Faith: An Ecologist's Journey to Motherhood, from which some of this essay is adopted, will be published in October.

By remembering us in your will
you can help ensure that
In These Times
remains a strong
and independent voice

For more information, call Circulation Director Luli Buxton, at 773-772-0100, ext. 239



TOPICS TO INCLUDE

What Kind of Welfare State Can We Have in the 21st Century? • Why Americans Don't / Can't Vote • Can the Internet Set Us Free? • The Politics of Black Civil Society and Community • Comics: Underground, Adult, Real-Life, and Radical • Reframing a Socialist Environmentalism • Why is the Left so Culturally Boring? • Burying the Third Way? • The End of Fast Food • Beyond Coalitions and Networking? • The International Women's Movement: Beijing Plus Five and Counting... • How Labor Fights Back in a De-Regulated Economy

WITH

Nuomi Klein, Bill Fletcher, Robin Alexander, Russell Jacoby, Barbara Epstein, Eric Schlosser, Barbara Garson, Jeff Faux, Hester Eisenstein, Donald Sassoon, Ray Teixeira, Jean Cohen, Richard Howard, Ted Rall, Fry, Seth Tobocman, Samir Amin, Frigga Haug, Joseph A. Buttigieg, Christine Kelly, Bogdan Denitch, Paul Buhle, Barbara Ehrenreich, Leo Panitch, Frances Fox Piven, Tariq Ali, Matt Wuerker, Tom Tomorrow, Julianne Malveaux, Adolph Reed Jr., Teresa Brennan, Manning Marable, Boris Kagarlitsky, Jeanne Barkan, Robin Blackburn, Darlene Miller, William K. Tabb, Carl Boggs, Susan Fainstein, Mark Seddon, Wolfgang Fritz Haug, Immanuel Wallerstein, Janet Wasko, David Harvey, Christian Parenti, Robert McChesney, Elmar Altvater, Joel Kovel, Birgit Mahnkopf, and many more.

April 13-15, 2001

New Location:

**The Cooper Union for the Advancement
of Science and Art
51 Astor Place - New York, New York**

Visit www.socialistscholars.org

for schedule and other information

**Socialist Scholars Conference - Ph.D. Program in Sociology,
Graduate Center City University of New York**

365 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10016 (212) 817-7868

Hostile Environment

The Cash Box Conservationists Come to Washington

By Jeffrey St. Clair

I'm both a compassionate conservative and a passionate conservationist," proclaimed Interior Secretary Gale Norton in late February during a speech at Bob Packwood's Dorchester Conference, an annual confab on the Oregon Coast for Western Republicans. "I respectfully disagree with those who say that to be good stewards of our national treasures, we must be willing to sacrifice jobs."

Norton didn't elaborate on what she meant by this. Nor did she unveil her agenda at the Interior Department, other than to say that she believed Snake River chinook salmon could be saved without tearing down the four dams that have brought them to the brink of extinction, and that the oil that lies under the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge could be exhumed without so much as a stain on the tundra. But the people in the audience got her drift. "When you compare Gale to Bruce Babbitt, you know that help is on the way," says Paulette Pyle, a lobbyist for pesticide and agribusiness concerns.

Consider those national monuments created during the closing hours of the Clinton presidency. Many right-wingers want Norton to get rid of them. But that's not Norton's style. As she told the *Washington Post*: "I'm not Jim Watt. I've matured."

Instead, Norton has decided to leave the monuments intact, but she has signaled that it might be OK to explore for oil or coal inside them. That's how you can be "a good steward of our national treasures" without "sacrificing jobs."

The early read on Norton is that she is a lot smarter and more politically savvy than her mentor Watt. Norton understands what many of Republicans failed to notice: The national monument designations were mainly political fluff

that imposed few real restrictions on commercial activities inside the boundaries. Bush backed up Norton's nefarious scheme. "There are parts of the monument lands where we can explore without affecting the overall environment," he mumbled in an interview with the *Denver Post*. "It depends upon the cost-benefit ratio. There are some monuments where the land is so widespread, they just encompass as much as possible. And the integral part—the precious part, so to speak—will not be despoiled. There's a mentality that says you can't explore and protect land. We're going to change that attitude. You can explore and protect land."



Big Oil's Dream Team: Norton, Bush and Abraham.

It's easy to see where this kind of boasting is headed. The Bush administration is advancing on multiple fronts, aimed at forcing the environmental community to blink and sign off on a deal. Perhaps it's protection of the national monuments in exchange for limited exploration of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Or vice versa. Some believe that Bush's inner circle (namely Cheney and Norton) is less anxious to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge than it

is to resurrect old Reagan-era schemes involving the Rocky Mountain Front, the eastern flank of the mighty range running from north of Denver through Wyoming and Montana. They could tap the Rockies' oil, coal, shale oil and, if you believe the oil industry's press releases, the largest trove of natural gas on the continent.

In another example of the Norton two-step, she has offered, as proof of her green bona fides, a plan to boost the budget of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a federal trust account that is used to purchase threatened lands with unique natural

values. To the uninitiated this sounds like a laudable endeavor. After all, under past Republican administrations the billion-dollar LWCF has been moribund: Either it was unused because of right-wing opposition or juggled around in order to help conceal the size of the federal deficit. But the kicker is that the LWCF is financed by royalties from oil drilling on federal lands and the Outer Continental Shelf. So any hike in LWCF funding will necessarily involve an increase in public-lands oil leases, an unyielding obsession of the Bush team.

Norton adores the LWCF because it fits snugly into her free-market environmentalism mantra, which dictates that private property rights are sacred and not to be trampled upon by imperious federal regulations, such as the Endangered Species or Clean Water acts. According to her worldview, if the federal government wants to regulate use of private lands it should pay compensation or buy the property outright. Of course, this kind of cash box conservationism spells a death knell for many environmental laws and, if taken to its logical extreme, is also a surefire way to bankrupt the federal treasury faster than the Bush tax cuts.

One of Norton's rare missteps so far was her pick for the No. 2 position at Interior: Stephen Griles, an oil and mining industry lobbyist. Griles is one of those Washington political poltergeists, who scurries back and forth between the government and private sector wreaking havoc on behalf of his industry cronies. Under Reagan, Griles toiled in several different slots in the Interior Department, most deviously at the Office of Surface Mining, where he strove to obstruct any limits on the machinations of big coal. His tenure there, highlighted by an unyielding defense of even the most rapacious forms of strip mining, has earned him the lifelong enmity of anti-mining activists from Arizona to West Virginia.

As much as the anti-federal government crowd excoriates Washington as a kind of postmodern Babylon, once they've settled inside the Beltway, few of them seem to return to their homesteads in the hinterlands even after their careers as so-called public servants have expired. Griles, for instance, cashed in on his expertise at manipulating the government in the service of industry by becoming a top corporate lobbyist at the coyly named National Environmental Strategies.

But Norton's choice of Griles may backfire. In doing so, she snubbed Dick Cheney's flyfishing buddy John Turner, thought to be the frontrunner for the post. Turner, who lives near Cheney in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, served as director of the Fish and Wildlife Service during the first Bush administration. Back then Turner was viewed as something of a moderate in a department headed by the zany Manuel Lujan. (Lujan once opined that perhaps some species, like the spotted owl, simply weren't equipped to handle the rigors of life in the modern world and should be allowed to gracefully enter the oblivion of extinction.) Ultimately, Turner's nomination was sabotaged by Wise Use zealots and their congressional stooges, most notably Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho), who chafed at Turner's reluctance to openly defy the edicts of the Endangered Species Act.

But upon closer scrutiny, Turner's reputation as a conservationist—greatly abetted by mainstream green outfits—

proves rather hollow. Grassroots activists recall his efforts in the early '90s to suppress internal reports calling for the protection of the spotted owl and Pacific salmon stocks, as well as his willingness to entertain the notion of corporate sponsorship for the national parks. It may have been easier for smooth-talking Turner to advance the Norton/Bush agenda than Griles, a self-proclaimed *corporado*, who will be ceaselessly attacked by the green establishment as an industry puppet.

To get a better grip on where the Bush crowd is going, it's important to look into some of the more remote corners of the administration, where much of the real dirty work will be hatched and carried out. Take the decidedly unalluring Office of Management and Budget. OMB seems likely to lead a stealth attack on environmental regulations, much as it did during the previous Bush administration. "What regulations Bush won't kill outright, they'll simply starve to death for lack of funds," predicts Larry Tuttle, director of the Portland, Oregon-based Citizens for Environmental Equity.

One of the more obscure outposts at OMB is the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. It's the equivalent of a Star Chamber for corporations seeking relief from pesky environmental and safety standards. To head this outfit, which one Senate staffer dubbed "the office of corporate ombudsman," Bush has nominated John Graham, a longtime hired gun for polluting industries. Graham now runs the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, which has received millions in financial aid from dozens of oil, timber, chemical and mining companies, including: Arco, timber giant Boise Cascade, BP, the Chemical Manufacturer's Association, the Chlorine Chemistry Council, DuPont, General Motors and Monsanto.

Graham's routine is to solicit money from big corporations facing litigation or legislation to curb shoddy, toxic or dangerous business practices. He then writes a book, paper or article debunking the supposed dangers, citing "risk analysis" studies showing that the costs to the company of correcting the problem far outweigh the risk to the public. According to a report by Public Citizen, in 1991 Graham sought money for his center from Philip Morris. Five months later, Graham asked the tobacco company to review a chapter in his book on second-hand smoke. Since then Philip Morris repeatedly has cited Graham's work to undermine the EPA's efforts to regulate second-hand smoke.

Graham currently serves on the EPA's dioxin review board, where last year he put forward the inane theory that small doses of dioxin might actually help prevent certain forms of cancer. He urged the EPA to include a note in its report on the deadly chemical stating that dioxin is "an anti-carcinogen." Had Graham prevailed, this absurd footnote would have made it extremely difficult for the EPA to hold the line on dioxin emissions. "A person with such disdain for public priorities should not be given a last-ditch veto over the will of the public," warns Joan Claybrook, director of Public Citizen. "Installing an industry-funded flack in such a crucial position would harm the public for generations."

One key Bush appointee thinks dioxin might actually help prevent certain forms of cancer.

Despite toiling for biotech companies and the pesticide-happy agribusiness giants of California's Central Valley, Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman waltzed through her confirmation hearings and wasn't even confronted with a single nagging question on her plans for the Forest Service, the largest agency in the Agriculture Department. But two months into her tenure, things over at the USDA are beginning to look very bleak indeed.

Before Clinton left office, the Forest Service completed its much ballyhooed plan for roadless areas in national forests. An election-year scheme designed to boost Al Gore's standing with greens, the plan called for banning most new roads and some forms of logging in so-called roadless lands 5,000 acres and larger in national forests. In the end, the proposal, which was riddled with loopholes, fell far short of the expectations of most environmentalists. Even so, the plan was wildly popular with the public and political opinion-makers. The roadless area rule was set to go into effect on March 13. But the timber industry, in the nadir of another of its frequent slumps, fumed at the idea and goaded Bush into slapping a hold on the plan soon after the inauguration. Then in separate suits Boise-Cascade and the state of Idaho asked a federal court to overturn the rule, putting forth the fantastical theory that the plan hadn't been subjected to enough public review.

That case should have been dismissed outright, because the roadless area plan had gone through more public review than any environmental impact statement in the past 25 years. "There were more than 1.6 million comments and 600 public meetings," says Tim Hermach, director of the Native Forest Council, based in Eugene, Oregon. "This plan was studied to death."

But the Bush administration lawyers, put in the indelicate position of having to defend a plan they wanted to see abolished, simply threw up their hands, telling the judge they would be willing to suspend implementation of the plan indefinitely. "This was their first opportunity to defend the policy and they've come in with an offer to suspend it," says Tom Preso, an attorney for Earthjustice, which is representing numerous environmental groups that have intervened in the case. "The Bush administration is giving every indication that they want to bring bulldozers back into the national forests. It's certainly a far cry from the vigorous defense of the rule promised by Attorney General John Ashcroft during his confirmation hearings."

But even the hand-picked judge didn't buy the Bush lawyers' argument. He told them that they couldn't simply put the plan in dry storage, and had to defend its merits in court. In reality, this is an orchestrated winking game between the Bushies and their pals in industry—the lawsuit and the pleadings were coordinated between the plaintiffs and the defendants. This incestuous scam points toward a key Bush strategy: Let third-parties do the heavy lifting on the most controversial issues in order to deflect some of the political heat.

A similar scenario is playing itself out in Alaska, where the Bush administration is allowing the state's congressional delegation and governor, Democrat Tony Knowles, to take the lead on the heated issue of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, a scheme that enjoys little public support. Indeed, the administration quietly urged Knowles to push the state legislature into approving a \$1.85 million appropriation to a front group, called Arctic Power, which will in turn lobby Congress and unleash a nationwide public relations campaign backing oil drilling in the tundra.

Throughout the campaign, Bush constantly reminded rural voters that he owned a ranch and sympathized with the plight of the small farmer. This was prefabricated pabulum for the rural folks and Bush, aside from his antipathy for the estate tax, apparently didn't mean a word of it. In early March, family farm groups, already staggering from giveaway trade pacts, chronically depressed prices and relentless consolidation, were dealt another blow when Veneman invalidated a referendum approved last

Green Heroes

Northern Alaska Environmental Center Fairbanks, Alaska

As the Bush administration crusades to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil interests, one Fairbanks-based group is doing everything in its power to stop it. For years, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center has been the strongest defender of Alaska's wild country, using litigation and public education to advocate environmental protection—especially for the pristine coastal plain of the far north.

It's not an easy task. BP and Exxon-Mobil—the two largest oil operations in Alaska—contributed more than \$1.7 million to the Bush campaign coffers, and the industry is expecting a mighty big favor in return. Now that Bush is painting the drilling scheme as a "national security concern" and hyping California's power debacle as an "energy crisis," the fate of the refuge seems grim.

But the center quietly has been winning over many conservatives to the side of conservation. "We are working to reach out to people who don't identify themselves as environmentalists," says

Executive Director Arthur Hussey. Since the group was founded in 1971, membership has grown to 1,100 members.

One of the group's major projects is public awareness, especially in the Fairbanks area. The center has collaborated with local schools

to implement an environmental education curriculum, and sponsors Camp Habitat, the nation's northernmost environmental day camp. Aside from Arctic issues, the Northern Center also promotes sustainable

management of Alaska's boreal forests and closely monitors the mining industry, often working with companies to establish the least environmentally damaging practices. Their Denali Watch program monitors tourism's impact on the Alaskan interior. "We are the eyes and ears of the area's environmental community," Hussey says.

K.K.A.

For more information write:
218 Driveway St.
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Or visit: www.northern.org



year by farmers to end a mandatory promotional program they said was corrupt.

Most of the money from the program funds the National Pork Producers Council, the trade association for the big pork processors that are putting small farmers out of business. The director of the council, Al Tank, served on Bush's agriculture transition team. The farmers charged that their own money was being used against them to pursue ecologically destructive and price-depressing factory hog farms. "The vote proved that we don't want money going out of our pockets for factory farms and corporate control anymore," says Roger Allison, of the Missouri Farm Crisis Center. "But now they've sabotaged it, declaring war on the family farm and on democracy."

Meanwhile, under the mantra of states' rights, the USDA and EPA are moving to ease pollution rules on big industrial farms and feedlots. In Oregon, for example, dairy and beef cattle from factory ranches generate about 7.5 million tons of manure a year, much of it ending up in streams and rivers. In 1998, the EPA found that 18 of the large ranches were violating the meager requirements of the Clean Water Act and began handing out fines and issuing corrective orders. Now the Republican members of the Oregon congressional delegation are asking Whitman and Veneman to withdraw the fines, halt inspections and turn enforcement over to the state.

A similar move is afoot in Ohio, where the Farm Bureau and other lobbyists for agribusiness are telling Whitman to make EPA inspectors stay out the Midwest and allow state agriculture departments (not even the environmental agencies) to decide how much pollution the meat factories can release into streams and rivers. "Each state knows how to handle their situation better than the feds," says Ohio Farm Bureau president Terry McClure, who notes he was encouraged by Bush and Whitman's receptiveness to the idea.

This is another key element of the Bush approach: Using code words such as "state primacy," "local control" and "bottom-up planning," the Bush environmental team is seeking to swiftly devolve regulatory power from federal to state and local authorities—bodies over which industry enjoys an even tighter stranglehold than they do over the feds.

Over at the EPA, Christie Todd Whitman has lived a double life. On the outside, she has sounded like a perkier version of her predecessor, Carol Browner. Whitman bragged about getting the once-taboo words "global warming" into Bush's first address to Congress, and publicly chafed about the decision to strip federal funding from groups that advocate abortion overseas. During a trip to Trieste, Italy for a G-8 meeting, Whitman also told European environmental ministers that the Bush administration, unlike Clinton/Gore,

would pursue mandatory caps on carbon dioxide emissions. Whitman yielded glowing press coverage citing her courage and feisty independence.

Then the plank was sawed off behind her. Bush announced that there would be no carbon caps and told Whitman to stop referring to carbon dioxide as a "pollutant." Cheney was rolled out of the hospital in time to do damage control, saying that Whitman had merely been a "good soldier" attempting to defend a "misguided" policy. Then Whitman herself was ushered forward to make a public retraction. She cited the looming energy crisis as the rationale for continued U.S. intransigence on the build-up of greenhouse gasses.

The whole thing looked silly and amateurish, but it was a calculated maneuver. The Bush strategy is to hype up the California power crunch into a national energy emergency, which they intend to use to advance their agenda on multiple fronts: increased drilling and exploration, suspensions of clean air rules, new tax credits for oil and gas companies, and more subsidies for nuclear power. The carbon dioxide retreat served as a kind of public sacrifice to illustrate their seriousness.

Less widely reported is Whitman's move to reduce existing air quality standards in the Great Lakes region. On March 18, Whitman announced that the EPA would relax pollution rules for gasoline in Chicago and Milwaukee. Whitman said the move was needed in order to keep gas

Green Heroes

West Virginia Highlands Conservancy Charleston, West Virginia

A century's worth of mineshafts fill in the hollows of Appalachia, but nothing compares to the eyesores of bald and broken mounds that now scar West Virginia. "Mountaintop removal," or the blowing up of entire peaks to harvest deep pockets of coal, now makes up one-third of the state's mining industry. But one local group is making some good headway in putting this practice to rest.

Since its founding in 1967, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the state's largest environmental group, has pushed the mining-friendly legislature to pass stricter regulations and enact stronger forest protections. In 1998, the conservancy joined forces with a group of coalfield residents to sue the state division of the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers. They charged that the government bureaucracies illegally issued permits to mining com-

panies for mountaintop removal and ignored a "buffer zone" regulation, which outlaws mining within 100 feet of waterways. In 1999, a federal judge ruled in their favor. The mining interests appealed the case, and a decision is expected sometime soon.

Even if the group wins the lawsuit, the fight won't be over. In order to abate the imaginary "energy crisis" George W. Bush is concocting, the coal industry is expecting the government to relax mining laws and recommend increased production. And Interior Secretary Gale Norton, whose department includes the Office of Surface Mining, used to be on the bankroll of the coal mining industry—she spent years defending them in Colorado's courts. K.K.A.



For more information write:
P.O. Box 306
Charleston, WV 25321
Or visit: www.wvhighlands.org

prices from "spiking" this summer. Of course, this merely creates another incentive for the oil companies to price gouge and offer up environmental regulations as a handy scapegoat.

Just how much of all this will the Bush team be able to get away with? Well, that depends on how well they execute what Gale Norton calls the "collaboration" approach, getting a few Democrats and one or two mainstream environmental groups to sign off an end-run around federal laws and regulations. It has already borne fruit. The carbon cap retreat was praised by three top Democrats: West Virginia Sen. Robert Byrd, the coal companies' one-man praetorian guard, Louisiana's John Breaux, the dark knight of the oil lobby, and Michigan Rep. John Dingell, loyal servant of the Detroit automakers. Of course, there's nothing innovative here. With Clinton, this was known as triangulation. The new fusion politics looks a lot like the old variety.

Cheney's decision to steamroll through the Bush environmental agenda within the first 100 days may yet backfire. Handing out gifts to chemical companies, big oil, strip mining outfits, nuclear power and coal companies all in a month stinks of overkill. The decision to roll back newly imposed limits on arsenic levels in drinking water may prove to be a fatal miscalculation. Sure, there's a double standard. After all, Clinton waited eight years to impose the rule and Bush is taking the heat from the press and a newly energized environmental movement for junking it before it even went into effect. The fuss over the carbon dioxide caps represents a similar exercise in hypocrisy. But that defines the new reality: Bush will be held to a higher standard on these matters than Clinton. Each move to erode environmental regulations will be countered by acrid attacks from the likes of the Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society. And the big greens, so often tongue-tied by Clinton, are top-notch at flaying Republicans.

But the more insidious problem for the Bush gang may reside within their own party. What the Republican leadership, in a blind fervor to repay its corporate underwriters, ignores at its peril is the growing sentiment toward environmental protection within the rank-and-file of their own party. Already, four Republican senators—Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, James Jeffords of Vermont, and Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine—have chided some of the moves as misguided and dangerous for the future political health of the party. It took nearly four years to hear similar caveats about Clinton from Democrats.

Polls show that even Republicans oppose drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and loosening drinking water standards, and that more than 50 percent support strengthening laws that have long been bugaboos of the industrial right-wing, such as the Clean Air and Endangered Species acts. The evidence for this can be seen in the growth of a new environmental group that is already putting George Bush's feet to the fire: Republicans for Environmental Protection. These really are Republicans *and* hardcore environmentalists. And they are gaining more clout inside the party with each Bush misstep. "We're really disappointed in the president," says Martha Marks, president of Republicans for Environmental Protection. "Obviously, we were trusting he would live up to his campaign promise, but it seems like the wrong forces or the anti-environmental forces inside his administration are prevailing. But we've seen a strong spike upward in membership after the Norton nomination, and it really hasn't stopped. We've had several hundred more members sign up in the last two months. Maybe as many as 1,000." ■

Green Heroes

Rodolfo Montiel Flores

Campesinos Ecologistas de la Sierra de Petalan Guerrero, Mexico

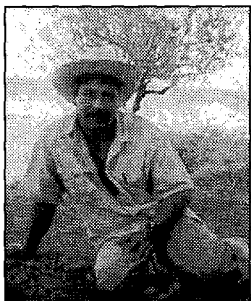
For years, a humble bean farmer named Rodolfo Montiel Flores silently watched big companies chop down the virgin forests of his home, Guerrero's Sierra Madre mountains in southwest Mexico. In 1994, NAFTA relaxed environmental regulations, making it cheaper and easier for loggers to move product north of the border. Companies' appetite for forests grew, and in 1995 Boise Cascade—one of America's largest and worst logging companies—set up shop in Guerrero. Clear-cutting quickened in the Sierra Madres. The rivers near Montiel's home turned to mud as loose dirt tumbled down the bare mountains.

Montiel decided he'd had enough. He sent letters to Guerrero's governor and the Mexican environmental minister to vent his frustrations. "Rivers have have been reduced to streams," Montiel wrote. "And these are now just threads of water."

Three years passed with no response from the government. So Montiel took further action and organized his local colleagues into an anti-logging group, Campesinos Ecologistas de la Sierra de Petalan. The farmers staged blockades of logging roads and Boise Cascade eventually closed its operations in the Sierra Madres.

Suddenly, the members of Montiel's group started receiving death threats.

On May 2, 1999, the Mexican army broke up a meeting of the campesinos with gunfire, killing one person. They arrested Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera Garcia, another member of the environmental group, on charges of marijuana cultivation and illegal weapons possession—even though Montiel does not even own any property and soldiers could not recall the crops' location. Two years later, Montiel and Garcia still sit in solitary confinement. They've been subjected to beatings, electric shock and other forms of torture.



Several major environmental and human rights organizations—including the Sierra Club, Greenpeace and Amnesty International—have come to Montiel and Cabrera's defense, saying the farmers' successful organizing is the real reason for their

imprisonment. Last year, the Goldman Foundation awarded Montiel its prestigious prize and called for a full investigation into the case. But such international pressure yielded no results. Meanwhile, four members of Montiel's group have been killed and several others have fled their homes due to death threats.

K.K.A.

For more information visit:
Amnesty International, www.amnesty.org
Sierra Club, www.sierraclub.org

The Fast Food Jungle

By Caleb Mason

The manufacture and consumption of fast food serves as a potent metaphor in many areas of social criticism—talk of “McJobs,” “McHouses” and now

Fast Food Nation

By Eric Schlosser

Houghton Mifflin

356 pages, \$25

“McWorld” is commonplace. But to Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*, fast food is more than just a metaphor, and its world-shaping power is more than merely symbolic. The staggering sums we spend on fast food should be enough, by themselves, to warrant book-length treatment. Fast food, we learn, is the object of more consumer spending (\$110 billion last year) than higher education, computers or cars. Or, if we’re interested in its cultural significance, we spend more on fast food than on “movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos and recorded music—combined.”

The fast food industry has pioneered and ruthlessly enforced the regime of consolidation, homogenization and standardization—in both production and consumption—that has swept over our economy in the past 30 years. The companies that control the industry have exerted their enormous influence—purchasing power, economies of scale, lobbying clout—to help transform American agricultural production; thwart unionization and living-wage movements in the restaurant industry and the rest of the service sector; propel and accelerate the spread of suburban sprawl; and, perhaps most visibly, redraw the physical contours of Americans themselves, transmitting obesity like a communicable plague—a plague that is now spreading to all four corners of the earth. The public health threat of fast food is even more serious: Many deadly new pathogens have arisen and spread as a direct result of changes in cattle and poultry growing, meatpack-



ing and food preparation spurred by the rise of fast food.

This is a frightening vision. Schlosser aims to do what the best social criticism has always done: draw connections between the familiar and the unfamiliar, alerting us that much of what we take for granted in our comfortable lives is anything but natural, inevitable and innocuous. Schlosser demands that we think seriously about the consequences of the way we produce and eat food, as other social observers this century have demanded that we scrutinize sex, family life, education, television or the automobile.

Schlosser is a reporter, not an economist, historian or sociologist, so you will not find here as explicit a reliance on

social and economic theory as in some previous work with which *Fast Food Nation* might otherwise be compared: Stanley Aronowitz on working-class culture, Barbara Garson on the modern workplace, Jane Jacobs on cities or Doug Henwood on Wall Street. But Schlosser's book can stand alongside these influential studies as a well-researched, illuminating and angry examination of widespread cultural and economic practices that have a profound daily impact on millions of lives.

And Schlosser is not aiming at an academic audience: This is a book for all of us—for a nation that averages three burgers and four orders of fries per capita per week, a nation where every month 90 percent of our children eat at a McDonald's. A lack of critical reflection is the grease lubricating exploitation, and fast food thrives on unreflectiveness: The vast majority of fast food visits, according to the industry's own data, are made “on impulse.”

Everyone knows that fast food jobs suck. They're greasy, low-paid, short-term, unskilled and without benefits, and among teen-agers, who fill nearly all of them, they're not even cool. The cumulative impact of the fast food economy is stark: The restaurant industry is the largest private employer in the United States, and the great majority of these jobs—3.5 million of them—are in fast food. These workers comprise “by far the largest group of minimum wage earners.” McDonald's hires 1 million people a year, “more than any other American organization, public or private”; one in eight American workers have worked at McDonald's. In addition to its restaurants, McDonald's exerts near-total control over the production of commodities of which it is among the largest buyers: beef, potatoes, pork and poultry. And McDonald's competitors, fast food chains like Burger King and KFC, ape one another's tactics with great precision.

Fast food workers rarely have benefits of any sort, and typically turn over at several hundred percent each year. And they

are never, ever unionized. In addition to being low-paid and transient, fast food work is dangerous: the rate of injury in fast food jobs is among the highest of any job category. But if that weren't bad enough, fast food workers are now more likely to be murdered on the job (four to five per month) than are police, and though precise statistics are unavailable, Schlosser says they're probably more likely to be the victims of violent crime on the job than any other class of workers.

Led by the fast food chains, the restaurant industry has spent vast sums to oppose the minimum wage (yes, the minimum wage itself—not just hikes in it), federal protections for union organizing, federal food safety regulations and enforcement, and OSHA workplace safety standards. It was among the first industries to apply the principles of Taylorism—standardizing and simplifying each stage of production to eliminate the need for skilled workers—to every aspect of its business, aspiring to a “zero-training” work force of interchangeable and disposable part-timers.

Workers in fast food restaurants may be more likely to be murdered at work, but the nation's most dangerous job also owes its current scope, structure and working conditions to fast food: The meatpacking industry has been thoroughly transformed by the vast buying power and cost-cutting demands of the burger regime. In the past 30 years it has recrudescenced from the well-paid, unionized profession of the '60s—the product of decades of worker activism and progressive government regulation, building on Upton Sinclair's revelatory *The Jungle*—into yet another fin-de-siècle recreation of the 1890s: an extremely low-paid, dangerous and filthy job filled by desperate, powerless immigrants without unions, health care or job security.

Every aspect of cattle raising, from field to tray, is dictated by the demand of the fast food chains for ever-cheaper flesh. Schlosser vividly revisits this oft-told story: The belts on the killing floor speed up, more tendons and ligaments strain and tear, more fingers are lost, and more (1 in 5) cow intestines are punctured, spraying feces over the entire carcass. Since hamburger meat is made by combining cuts from dozens of animals, fecal contamination of commercial

ground beef is almost certain. And that feces is increasingly likely to carry nasty, rapidly mutating versions of the *E. coli* bacterium, which thrives in the nation's feedlots—vast gulags where thousands of cattle wait to die, penned shoulder to shoulder, hip deep in their own feces, and fed with whatever's cheapest: rotten grain, ground-up hogs, even newspapers used to line the cages in poultry houses.

“There is shit in the meat. ... Anyone who brings raw ground beef into his or her kitchen today must regard it as a potential biohazard.”

As Schlosser puts it plainly, “there is shit in the meat. ... Anyone who brings raw ground beef into his or her kitchen today must regard it as a potential biohazard.” And yet as inspections lag and infections soar, the industry has convinced several state legislatures to enact severely punitive revisions to libel codes to prevent people from “slandering” its product.

Fast Food Nation opens and closes with an existential dilemma: “Pull open the glass door, walk inside ... study the backlit color photographs above the counter.” And then? Do you place your order and stuff your face? Or do you turn around and walk out? Every encounter with fast food, Schlosser suggests, is a Sartrean moment of self-creation—literally so, since what we choose to eat becomes the very stuff of our bodies and brains. His solution to the multifold crises of the fast food plague is a simple choice: a mass “refusal to buy,” a potential boycott he likens to the spontaneous eruptions of civil disobedience that transformed Eastern Europe in the late '80s.

It's true of course that we all can, one at a time or en masse, make the decision to forego fast food. We can do so for any number of reasons: concerns about health, the environment, animal suffering, workplace justice or simple

aesthetics. Schlosser supplies ample fodder for such deliberations. But it's also true that people make their choices within particular confluences of circumstances—historical, political, economic, cultural—that present them with a set of variously realizable options. Schlosser should have given us a chapter exploring the ways in which the basic physical and social environment Americans occupy serves to constrain and direct our choices.

He gestures at such an analysis throughout the book, but he never approaches it directly, which weakens his too-brief chapter on possible solutions to the fast food crisis. Exhortations to virtue have their place, but public health reports on dietary habits and obesity unanimously agree that, as one recent Health and Human Services Department report puts it, “the focus on changing the behavior of individuals” as a response to obesity and diet-related diseases is “woefully inadequate.” Solutions should concentrate instead on broad environmental and structural conditions, and the material is available in Schlosser's book for such an analysis.

In particular, Schlosser clearly details the parasitism of fast food on the automobile: The rise of fast food restaurants coincided precisely with the massive federal road-building projects of the '50s, and continued with the car-driven suburban expansions of the past 30 years. (Fast food chains, he says, view highways and cars the way predators view prey.) He also observes that McDonald's is the world's largest purchaser of commercial spy-satellite photos, which it uses to predict the direction of incipient sprawl. It then selects cheap, exurban sites for its new stores, and these openings fuel a self-fulfilling cycle in which other chain stores and developers follow, all the while sucking up massive public subsidies for infrastructure.

But Schlosser does not make the link between breaking the addiction to fast food and breaking the addiction to cars. This is an unfortunate omission, given the extent to which public health experts, some of whom he cites, have stressed this connection. All those “impulse buys” are made by people driving by in their cars; people who sit in traffic for two or more hours a day are much more likely—regardless of individual virtue, taste or free will—to eat at the

roadside fast food joints that beckon like sirens from every off-ramp than people who have some other way to commute.

Just as car-only suburbanization has multiple ripple effects, so too do simple and inexpensive infrastructural offerings: bike lanes and bike paths; tax incentives for urban “infill” developments of new residential, office and manufacturing space; and, most important of all, shifting federal transportation spending away from roads and toward mass transit. As Schlosser points out—and as writers like Clay McShane have described in detail—mass transit in this country was systematically rooted out by

auto, tire, oil and cement companies; the “inherent superiority” of the car, and the “innate preference” of Americans for driving, are carefully constructed myths. Prophesying the end of the car culture is no more utopian than prophesying the end of the fast food culture, and Schlosser should have done so.

But that task can await other writers. As it stands, *Fast Food Nation* is quite up to its stated goal: forcing us to stop for a moment and reflect on our own actions. If the view is unpleasant, and it is, we can at least take heart in the knowledge that there are alternatives to fast food, alternatives close at hand,

easy to envision and easy to enact. Structural change comes from mass social movements, and here perhaps is one waiting to be born, emerging like Dionysus—the god of aesthetically pleasing sustenance—from his father’s thigh. It’s an American thigh, of course—pendulous, quivering and mottled with cellulite—but ready to deliver, one heaving contraction of nausea at a time. ■

Caleb Mason teaches philosophy at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. His e-mail address is cmason@sfasu.edu.

Noise of Art

By Anthony Mariani

There is a side of electronic music, specifically of the type DJ Spooky (“That Subliminal Kid”) traffics in, that someday could lead to groundbreaking new, multimedia work. If Jackson Pollock were only around, he’d love this stuff. Pollock’s greatest challenge was in responding with paint to what he saw and felt. The electronic artist today is entirely capable of dimin-

ishing the distance between emotion or idea, which we feel, and art, what we put down on paper or on polycarbonate disc. Summoning an entire symphony takes a push of a button. Understanding this only makes hearing artists like Spooky so heartbreaking. With all that equipment—and, we could suppose, big ideas about politics and peace—you’d think Spooky could articulate one hon-

est idea. You keep waiting, but all you typically get is noise of both varieties, too-verbal and not-verbal-enough.

Though he sometimes uses rappers in his songs, DJ Spooky (a.k.a. Paul Miller) is a silent sermonizer who doesn’t rely on language for his lectures. He uses car horns, the clatter of subways pulling into stations, hip-hop beats, video game explosions, talking heads, the effluvium of everyday life (the hip-hop beats come from the throbbing Hyundai going down the avenue). Allegedly inside or on top of his sonic constructs are comments on community, waste culture, co-dependency and basically the rest of what’s fucked up or peculiar about our digital age. Thing is, you can’t necessarily tell all this from the boom-siss beats, computer bleeps or synth asides. You might have to just read the liner notes—which may or may not include footnotes to Derrida or be 23 pages long.

This is why a museum is such a good place for Spooky. It is, as of late, where the populist aspirations of middlebrow culture are made to seem like rights of divinity, and where time once spent pondering ideas is now spent gazing over motorcycle parts or clothing fabric. Spooky has been exhibiting his audio collages in museums since around the time he first started gaining some cred as a club DJ, about five years ago—and when museums started opening up en masse to the possibilities of shows of spectacle. His most recent sonic work is part of “BitStreams,” a look into the importance of digital technology in American art, at the Whitney Museum in New York City.



DJ Spooky: keeping it real with allusions to Derrida.

At the Whitney, the elevator opens to the fourth floor, where "BitStreams" is located, to a huge wall of blue tubes of light, stacked next to each other like a long row of telephone poles or huge outdoor bug zappers. Behind the wall are assorted headphones. The set connected to DJ Spooky's song, "ftp:>snd>," is, like all the other "songs" along the wall (including pieces by John Herndon of Tortoise and Iranian singer Sussan Deyhim), identified by a yellow tag. On it reads the artist's mission statement (excerpted here): "In his conceptual sound work, DJ Spooky attempts to critique the social aspects of electronic culture. Describing his compositional method as 'cybernetic improvisation,' DJ Spooky surveys city streets, collecting sounds with a portable MiniDisc recorder. He then uses his laptop and various software programs to create urban sound collages." Consider yourself well read.

"ftp:>snd>" is sort of an "illbient" (meaning Spooky's knack for blending "ambient" with good vibes) brain massage. Made up of assorted, chopped and looped bits of traffic noise, "ftp:>snd>" is also a reminder of just how tedious lis-

tening to someone play with toys can be. "ftp:>snd>" could be considered an example of musique concrète, a 50-year-old development that makes use of everyday sounds to construct tone poems. And like most musique concrète, "ftp:>snd>" is not really about anything—though it is possibly a point of departure for one to contemplate the act

There's no drama, no dichotomy between aggressive and soft sounds; it's all white on white painting.

of listening to musique concrète itself; the idea's significant contribution to art is making one face technological innovation head on. Is "ftp:>snd>" enjoyable, enlightening? Hardly. But as motivation to hear new, heretofore unimaginable sounds, it is sufficient.

Someday, some electronic artist who wants to grapple with ideas about e-culture will dazzle us with an electronic song that uses technology as its basis, not necessarily as its only subject. DJ Spooky isn't the one. For him technology is the be-all, end-all of putting noise to tape in the first place. At the beginning of "Grapheme: Ghetto of the Mind" off *Subliminal Minded: The E.P.*, Spooky takes an organic drum solo and chops it into bits, leaving some notes bleeding in the air or stuttering without pause. The effect is similar to what proponents of glitchworkers pull off with broken CDs: DA-DA-DA-DA-DA-DA-DA-DA-DA-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE. That's the sound. There's no drama. There's no dichotomy between aggressive sounds and soft sounds; it's all white on white painting.

The typical Spooky song brings the listener close to something resembling art but then shuts the door in his face. At the beginning of "The Revolution Will Be Streamed," off *File Under Futurism*, an album of Spooky's remixes of tracks by the Freight Elevator Quartet, synth gurgles and assorted bass tones coalesce into a wonderful atmosphere for the big

beats to step into. The song appears to move in a logical direction, but then Spooky's fingers apparently begin to twitch. Sensible melodies get stomped on, groovy rhythms get deconstructed into crumbs and the entire infrastructure of what was fast becoming a likeable song buckles under so much pomo tinkering.

This isn't to say Spooky isn't musical. He can be. Most of his tuneful songs, what with their extemporaneous raps and flowy, tangible beats, reach out to the hip-hop fan. Spooky's critically acclaimed *Riddim Warfare* is a blend of hip-hop and drum 'n' bass, and is relatively accessible. But with every outing Spooky seems to fight the conformist label. He has developed a persona for himself as an outsider who breaks the boundaries of melody and harmony—and who believes he can concoct or coerce melody out of any stack of layered percussive effects à la John Cage. Having intellectualized his way—self-consciously or not—to cult status, through various writings and criticisms (he has contributed to *ArtByte* and *The Village Voice*), Spooky is a flashpoint artist for any discussion on adventurous (read: noisy) music making.

Yet Spooky can't be anything other than self-indulgent. What other reason would he have for coming close to making music without actually doing so other than for his own amusement or curiosity? The name for this phenomenon is called "chickening out"; writing without using verbs; crafting songs without music. While great for college dissertations (or articles like this), this type of avoidance, in music, amounts to a nose-thumb at people with ears and a desire to listen to new stuff. But that's the culture of dissonance: full of folk always shying away from facing a complexity or obstacle (like writing a solid pop tune) yet never growing short of enough adjectives to lament said obstacle's large weight and girth. Who else would Spooky be "writing" songs like "ftp:>snd>" for if not himself? We can't listen to them. They hurt. Then it must be for the aliens. Who knows. Who cares. ■

Anthony Mariani is a freelance music journalist whose work has appeared recently in *The Village Voice*, *Vibe* and *Salon*.

SUBSCRIBE!



Subscribe NOW

1 year/26 issues
for only **\$24.95**

Call 1-800-827-0270

Feminists on Film

By Rachel Rinaldo

In the early and mid-'90s, feminist media art was everywhere: an explosion of video art dealing with identity, sexuality and feminist history. Much of it was made by women—with lesbians and women of color playing a particularly

Women of Vision: Histories in Feminist Film and Video
Edited by Alexandra Juhasz
University of Minnesota Press
280 pages, \$19.95

important role. The art world for a brief moment turned its attention toward the burgeoning movement, and works by young women like Cheryl Dunye and Sadie Benning appeared in the Whitney Biennial and other elite venues.

But as the millennium came and went, the art elites moved on to an interest in video more generally, particularly as it appears in installations. Ambiguity and purely formal concerns are now the priorities as the art world shies away from more socially engaged work—even though a lot of feminist art also has dealt with formal concerns. Alexandra Juhasz's *Women of Vision*, a collection of interviews with 20 prominent female film and videomakers (and a complement to her 1998 documentary of the same name), is meant to prevent this important piece of cultural history from slipping away.

As Juhasz writes in her engrossing introduction, feminist film and video came out of the women's movement of the '70s, when the infrastructure of media access centers, collectives and venues created by activists enabled women (as well as poor people and people of color) to gain experience with technology they had never used before. For 30 years, feminist film and video has existed uncomfortably between art, activism and the entertainment industry. It encompasses everything from abstract, avant-garde film and documentaries to autobiographical work and community-activist videos.

Juhasz's interviews bring out this diversity and the contradictions between her subjects. They range in age from their twenties to their fifties, across

ethnicities and sexual orientations, as well as differing relationships to feminism. She notes that their only similarity is that they all do political work within contemporary culture,



Video images by (from top): Sadie Benning, Carolee Schneemann, Barbara Hammer and Vanalyne Green.

working with or concerning film, video, television and digital production.

The older generation of interviewees in *Women of Vision*—Carolee Schneemann, Barbara Hammer, Kate Horsfield and others—is much more strongly defined by feminism. Their concern with feminist issues seems hard-fought; many of them struggled with raising capital as well as for acceptance. Schneemann in particular is bitter that she has sold so few works, that she has never really had enough money to live on and produce the work she has envisioned. Hammer funded her own work out-of-pocket for a decade before she turned to more abstract filmmaking in order to attract grants (and it worked).

Some younger media artists, like Dunye and Eve Oishi, have a much more fluid, shifting sense of identity. For them, feminism is not always as central as race or sexuality. They are also critical of feminism for being anti-porn or too white. And while they have certainly struggled, funding and recognition seem to have come somewhat more easily to them than to their elders.

But what connects all of the women is a profound interest in speaking to an audience about complicated personal and social issues. Many of them are very concerned with reaching out to non-art and non-activist audiences to counter the damaging representations of women or people of color in the mainstream media, as well as to challenge them to think about identity in new ways. So Dunye made a feature film (1996's *The Watermelon Woman*) not because she was trying to go mainstream, but because she believes that most African-Americans do not watch independent videos or attend gay and lesbian film festivals, and she wanted to make something they would see.

Despite the growing numbers of female visual artists, television producers and filmmakers, images of women in the media are still mostly limiting and embarrassing. Female visual artists wear designer clothing and mingle with the fashion crowd, while musicians and actresses are often distinguished by their lack of clothing. Carol Leigh, a feminist porn artist and former sex worker, tries to create positive images of women's sexuality with her videos. She concludes, "We need more street-fighting women out there doing sex

work and writing about it, making pieces. There aren't enough images of big women, of fat women in the media."

Meanwhile, Vanalyne Green thinks of video as an "Ellis Island" for women and poor people, and wishes that people would fight harder to legitimize the form. But feminist studies and film studies have become institutionalized in the academy. Juhasz claims that the most viable public places for feminism may now be women's studies and queer studies programs at colleges and universities. This comes through most compellingly in interviews with younger media artists like Frances Negrón-Muntaner, Yvonne Welbon and Juhasz herself, who are very much positioned within the academy. But like Juhasz, one wonders what the effects of this inherently elite positioning may be.

Indeed, despite these filmmakers' intentions, most feminist film and video is rarely seen by activist audiences. There is a long history of debate (mirroring debates within activism) about whether media should be more conventional in form to appeal to a broad audience, or more experimental to reject dominant forms of

representation. Some films, notably Michelle Citron's *Daughter Rite* and the work of people like Kathy High and Su Friedrich, have bridged this gap. Yet in this age of fast edits and the Internet, viewers are far more sophisticated and receptive to experimental film than they

"We need more street-fighting women out there doing sex work and writing about it. ... There aren't enough images of big women."

are generally given credit for. Perhaps the conflict between aesthetics and politics might not be as important as it used to be.

Juhasz says that *Women of Vision* is an attempt to resist the depiction of women who choose unusual and precarious paths in life as deviant and

marginal. Instead, she hopes to examine "what it is to live the life of an artistic, intellectual, political woman in this society who finds herself compelled to speak to others, or speak from herself out into the world, onto a medium that records movement and sound in real time and that holds it there permanently."

She certainly succeeds in this goal, as her subjects speak articulately and expressively about their lives, passions and careers. *Women of Vision* should serve as a challenge to activists and artists to ensure that feminist film and video does not fade into obscurity. It might also push the rising generation of video activists to explore more innovative and experimental forms, to take up feminist theory, and to think through matters of representation and subjectivity. Perhaps the next generations of feminist theory and media art will be found among them. ■

Rachel Rinaldo is a graduate student, freelance writer and videomaker. Her e-mail address is rarinald@midway.uchicago.edu.



Howard Zinn



Barbara Ehrenreich



Molly Ivins

Yours for just \$1 a month!

That's right. You can read these great columnists in the pages of

The Progressive

for only \$1 a month.

That's the lowest subscription offer in more than 15 years, so **subscribe** today!

www.progressive.org

12 issues for only 12 dollars!

That's more than 71% off the newsstand price!

Name (please print) _____

Address, Apt. _____

City, State, Zip _____

☐ I'm enclosing my check for \$12.00.

☐ Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard.

Card No. _____ Expire _____

Signature _____

Order by mail: The Progressive

409 East Main Street, Madison, WI 53703

Order by fax: 608/257-3373

WITT4

HELP WANTED

YOUTH ORGANIZER: Progressive political organization seeks person to staff its youth group. Extensive travel & public speaking required. Good organizational, communication and writing skills required. Women, people of color and LGBT encouraged to apply. Send Resumes by April 30 to Horace Small, Director, Democratic Socialists of America 180 Varick St. 12fl, NYC 10014. Or email: dsa@dsausa.org. No calls.

CAMP FOR KIDS WITH LGBT parents: Mountain Meadow Summer Camp. Two-week overnight camp in New Jersey. Need staff. People of color and men especially encouraged to apply. Staff applications to Karen Miller, 1521 Hubbard Ave. #5, Detroit, Michigan 48209, (313) 843-6854. Spaces also available for campers. For more information, visit our website at

www.mountainmeadow.org or email at inquiries@mountainmeadow.org.

LANGUAGES

CENTRO MAYA: LEARN Spanish quickly, economically in beautiful Guatemalan Highlands, where reality is sweet, painful, significant. \$100-150 weekly covers 4-5 hours daily one-on-one instruction, full room-board. See www.centromaya.com. Email: maestros@centromaya.com

PUBLICATIONS

CONFESSIONS OF A diplomatic pouch clerk: www.pouchclerk.com

PERSONALS

Concerned Singles
links compatible singles who care about peace, social justice, gender equity, racism, and the environment. Nationwide. All ages. Straight/Gay. Since 1984.
FREE SAMPLE: 75. Box 444-IT, Lenox Dale, MA 01242. ☎ (413) 445-6309, OR http://www.concernedsingles.com

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

THE PALESTINE AID SOCIETY is sponsoring a multiracial delegation of Chicago area youth and young adults to visit the West Bank, Gaza and the 1948 territories of Palestine. The purpose of the delegation is to build ties between youth leaders in the Palestinian refugee community and in the U.S. If you are interested in sponsoring a young person, please contact

Abdelhakim Husien by email (hakim22269@yahoo.com). Please make out check or money order to : Palestine Aid Society and send to Palestine Youth Delegation c/o Southwest Youth Collaborative, 6400 S. Kedzie Chicago, IL 60629.

www.inthesetimes.com

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold—

Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold!

We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old!

— Fourth Verse, Union Solidarity song

Read Sydney Spiegel's book,

ALL EMPIRES DIE!

Pentland Press, \$13.95

(Order from your local or internet bookstore)

HISTORIC REPRINT of the 1936 Masterpiece...

CHRISTIANITY'S SOCIAL RECORD

By Joseph McCabe,
World-Famous Historical Scholar

A concise, provocative fact-filled account showing how the Christian Church retarded human progress and reeked with vice and corruption from early times through the Reformation period; and that an indictment of ecclesiastical abuses was finally brought about by Deists, Skeptics and Atheists.

booklet \$6.00 ppd. (USA)

INDEPENDENT PUBLICATIONS, P.O. BOX 102,
RIDGEFIELD, NJ 07657
www.freethoughtbooks.com



Read The Progressive Populist

A Journal from the Heartland with alternative news and views from Jim Hightower, Molly Ivins, Ralph Nader, Jesse Jackson, other muckrakers, agitators and the best of the nation's alternative press. . . . An antidote for your daily news. . . . Deflating pompous plutocrats since 1995.

Only \$29.95 for 22 issues.

For a free sample copy,
call toll-free 1-800-205-7067
or see www.populist.com

Does The Independent Citizen Thinker Still Have A Voice In America?

40 Lively Topics

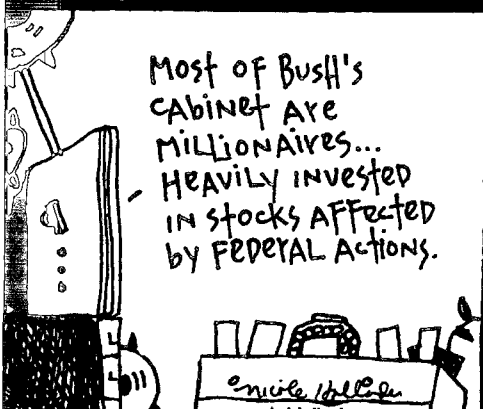
See table of contents at
bottom of homepage -
www.dynapress.com

ISBN 0-942910-20-6
6" x 9" Paper 180 pp.
\$14.95

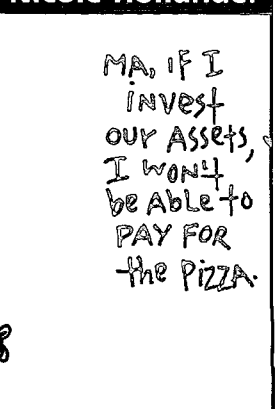


TO ORDER or see all Dynapress books:
www.amazon.com
Books, Author Karl Roebeling

SYLVIA



By Nicole Hollander



Continued from page 38

way to irrigate pepper spray from the eyes, and those aspiring to do tree sits and other lengthy direct actions are clued in on the importance of adult diapers: "Depends," goes the mantra, "are your friends."

And then there's climbing. The Ruckus climbing course, constructed of scaffolding and many yards of thick, sturdy rope, looms at the heart of camp like an unfinished castle, dominating the physical landscape and collective conversation. I am an awful climber. My trainer is Ingrid Gordon, a former Greenpeace action coordinator and a remarkably humble and soft-spoken woman, considering she once successfully sneaked onto a French nuclear test site off Tahiti and delayed a test blast. For half an hour, I am up in the air, chafing in my harness, alternately dangling and fumbling, while poor Ingrid hollers up at me: "Now bring your right hand over. Your other right hand! Come on, dude."

As thrilling as it is to finally achieve mastery of climbing (well, competence, at least), action camp's truly memorable moments occur outside the trainings. Each night, after the last panel or roundtable discussion, there are campfires and keg beer, with all the giddy good cheer and easy familiarity of any week in the woods. The inevitable flirtation and gossip is counterbalanced by a sustained, oftentimes tense, group conversation about systemic patriarchy, beginning with an announcement one morning from a concerned community member that "at last night's discussion, 38 men spoke and only nine women." This leads to a series of "gender caucuses" addressing issues of sexism and heterosexism in the world of progressive organizing, a feature surely absent from concurrent festivities at Daytona Beach.

The Peace River gathering is only Ruckus' second "alternative spring break," but they've held dozens of actions camps since forming in October 1995. "We're an enabling organization," Shan explains. "We're involved in aiding and abetting social change movements—providing technical support, logistical support, helping with media, helping to bring actions together."

"We ripped a lot of the original ideas [for action camp] off from Greenpeace, their traditional form," confesses Ruckus director John Sellers. "Though it's certainly evolved a lot since then, as we've come into contact with a lot of different movements. We said, what is it that we have to give away? What do we want to share? We have this tactically led movement that is fascinated with tactics, but we've layered on strategy and critique—the everyday, down-and-dirty, stick-it-out work that truly radicalizes communities across different struggles."

Shan calls it a "holistic" approach; Sellers reckons that the goal is "to feed the entire activist spirit and mind." Call it what you will, it ain't cheap. Shan estimates the total bill for action camp at between \$40,000 and \$50,000, and Sellers puts Ruckus' annual operating budget up around \$800,000. (Participants are asked for a \$75 donation to attend.) Which explains why Sellers disappears for a couple days mid-week, long enough to pay a visit to Ben Cohen, of Ben & Jerry's fame, one of Ruckus' sev-

eral wealthy backers. Other Ruckus supporters have included Body Shop founder Anita Roddick, Doors drummer John Densmore and Hollywood's go-to progressives, Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon. Ted Turner's foundation gave until last year, when the multi-bazillionaire began to take issue with some of Ruckus' targets. "As it turns out, Ted is a pretty big free trade fan," says Sellers with a smile.

While Sellers is out shaking the money tree, I spend time getting to know my fellow campers. Some carry very specific political identities, ranging from various stripes of

anarchism to committed socialists to Greens; more often they are ideologically young, just radicalized enough to suspect that the fundamental solutions to social and environmental injustice may not lie in the figure of Al Gore.

Early in the week I meet Gabriel, a gentle, articulate senior from NYU and a budding indy media activist. Like many camp participants, his life as an activist more or less began with the Battle in Seattle: "I don't think it was just one second that ticked and I said, 'I'm an activist,'" he says. "But when I saw [what happened in] Seattle, I was like, something big is starting ... it

turned everyone's attention. It opened people's eyes."

Dana is a bright-eyed 20-year-old Cornell student and environmentalist by way of museums, outdoor education and science camps; Ruckus, she says, is "the first real activist training I've had." Dana is delighted to have discovered such a vibrant community of fellow travelers: "It'll be very difficult for me to keep the motivation going [for activist work] when I'm not at camp," she figures. "But it's so good to know that there's people all over the country doing this."

RAN's Hogue would be glad to hear of it: She says for her, and other activists who've been on the line for a few years, one of the powerful advantages of the camps is taking "people who are aware and training them in the skills to get involved. The more we can share, the less we're going to feel isolated and burned out."

One night I hitch a ride up to the showers with Eddie, a union stagehand from Florida who is currently pursuing a master's in history; at 42 he is one of the few campers who has decisively graduated from late adolescence. We chat about the curious lingua franca of the camp, a mixture of military vocabulary and therapeutic dialogue; in workshops we parse out the difference between a "strategy" and a "tactic" one moment, discuss the importance of "I feel" statements and creating a "safe space" in the next.

Eddie notes a similarity between this sort of touchy-feely language—which comes along with a very slow, deliberate and heavily facilitated conversational process—and the speaking styles used in drug and alcohol recovery centers. "All this stuff about 'checking your feelings' and 'vibes watching,'" he says, "is right out of Alcoholics Anonymous."

It's no coincidence. The anti-globalization movement, like the recovery community, sees its battle as against an addiction, one that has progressed into a disease. In one anti-Citigroup speech, RAN organizer Patrick Reinsborough

**On Monday, we study
nonviolence in theory
and practice.
By Friday, we are
mastering the art of
U-locking our necks
to the axle of a van.**

sets up the analogy that the pursuit of capital has become a pathology, a cancer. "We live in a doomsday economy," Reinsborough proclaims. "We're the generation that's going to decide: Are we going to live or die?"

"In addition work you speak carefully while you coalesce around your pathologies," Eddie suggests. "Now I see the radical community coalescing around capitalism, which is our cultural pathology."

Whatever its origins, the camp's coded language can seem arbitrary, and, at times, comical. A rapid-fire series of ideas is called "popcorning"; during large meetings we split into "dyads" or "triads" and then "debrief" with the group. Instead of applauding, people often signal assent by "twinkling," which means raising both hands in the air and wiggling the fingers rapidly, as if playing an invisible toy piano. Paradoxically, this system of group-specific language helps to create a community while simultaneously erecting a barrier to its accessibility. Often, in sessions on campaign building or grassroots organizing, I find myself thinking, "You want to build bridges to other communities? Stop twinkling!"

I am not the only one who notices this problem, and several others along with it. Indeed, while learning, the group engages in a fair bit of soul searching. How does an idealist community deal with issues of class and gender? To what extent are we fundamentally committed to nonviolence? If

we're working to break the backs of racist institutions, how come the camp's population—like that on the streets in the recent mass demonstrations—is overwhelmingly white?

To the last question, Shan offers one answer: "It has a lot to do with what Ruckus is and where we came from," he says. "Ruckus and RAN have both really broadened their scopes, but that being said, we both came out of a radical environmental movement that is primarily white." Nor does Shan see the camp's whiteness as a problem, per se. "Our job is not to diversify," he says. "Our job is to do the best work we can do, in solidarity with the people that are most affected by the problems we're working on."

If the camp does offer any solution to the race problem, it is to talk and talk about it, to replace any sense of white guilt with one of brotherhood, of taking part not in the beginning of a movement, but in one that has been happening for centuries all over the world. "We are the product," announces one camper during his speech on the year he spent living and working with the Zapatistas, "of 500 years of resistance!"

Action camp climaxes on Saturday afternoon with a massive group demonstration, in which we are charged with overrunning a hypothetical university to protest an appearance on campus by Citigroup CEO Sanford "Sandy" Weill. Our trainers disappear to let us hash out a plan of attack; they will re-appear in character, as school administrators, campus security, local police and various other incarnations of The Man. Reinsborough, in high dudgeon, will take on the lead baddie role as Weill himself.

Forty-five minutes later it's go time, and the young activists fan out across the pretend campus, some to blockade the entrance, some to demonstrate at the building where Weill is to speak, others to scale the walls of the administration building. Though we know it is a mock action, hearts pound and adrenaline flows. When the ruckus begins and I am interviewed by the fake media (appropriately, I've taken the role of press spokesman), I holler and shout, wild with the energy of the righteous; when my comrades are fake arrested and taken to fake jail, I am indignant that their right to free speech should so ruthlessly curtailed by the fake powers that be.

From the jail I rush over to the "administrative building," actually the infamous climbing course. An enthusiastic crowd, ringed by pretend police, cheer on the team of six young activists who hang on ropes, waving their fists into the Florida breeze, alternately decrying the evils of Citigroup and demanding the release of those in lockup.

During the post-action debriefing, our trainers—reverted from jackbooted thugs—caution that, though we were successful in chasing the enemy off campus ("I never spoke a word," says Reinsborough-cum-Weill), our message was mostly lost in the shuffle. Caught up in the excitement of the moment, we probably "lost the media war." The climbing group is chastised for yelling dirty words from their positions on the ropes. Most of the "non-arrestables" managed to get themselves arrested, including our entire medical support team.

The action is declared a success anyway, and we head jubilantly for the campfire. The next generation of radical activists isn't perfect. But they're learning. ■

Ben Winters is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles. His e-mail address is ben_winters@hotmail.com.



DAVID MCNEIL/NEWSMAKERS

Action camp features crash courses in everything from walkie-talkies to pepper spray. And then there's the climbing.

Ruckus trainees rehearse a protest dance.

Camp Ruckus

Basic training for the New New Left

By Ben Winters

ARCADIA, FLORIDA

I have been to the revolution, and I have good news: It tastes fantastic. To clarify: I have been to "action camp," a week-long holiday for the dissenting set, sponsored by the Ruckus Society, those modern masters of nonviolent civil disobedience noted lately for their prominent role in the protests against the WTO in Seattle, the IMF in D.C. and at the party conventions last summer. Three or four times a year Ruckus picks a fairly isolated locale, stakes some tents and digs in for a week's worth of training/community building. In mid-March, I journeyed to Peace River campground in Arcadia, Florida, to join Ruckus and invited guests—88 activists, mostly of college age, 55 logistical and training staff, plus the delegation from camp co-sponsor Rainforest Action Network (RAN)—for the latest throwdown.

The days are long and the work is intense, but thanks to an outfit called Activists with Aprons, the food is plentiful and delicious. There's oatmeal or Miso soup for breakfast and gooshy chocolate deserts at night, hand-made pasta and sauce, Thai and Mexican feasts—all prepared in a giant blue-and-white-striped tent emblazoned with a crossed fork and knife.

But we have not traveled from our far corners of the globe (besides students and organizers from all reaches of America, there are at least two Canadians in our midst, a group from Amnesty International's London HQ and a young organizer from Zimbabwe) just for the fine vegetarian cuisine. Nor are we here to make friends, tussle with the stray puppy wandering about camp, or trade nervous jokes about the fire ants, coral snakes and alleged alligator on whose territory we are encroaching.

around, the *bête noir* is Citigroup, the world-girding institution founded in 1998 by the merger of Citibank and Traveler's Insurance. "Citigroup is the No. 1 bankroller of fossil fuel extraction worldwide," announces Ilyse Hogue of RAN, in one of the week's many fiery speeches decrying the financial colossus. "They are number one in forestry operations, operations that see people and animals as things that need to be simply moved out of the way."

And that's just the top of the list. We learn of Citigroup's predatory lending practices in America's inner cities, its underwriting of the burgeoning prison-industrial complex and a laundry list of other sins against humanity and the natural world. Focusing on the mind-boggling perniciousness of a single corporation has two strategic effects on the camp. On the one hand, it fulfills Ruckus' and RAN's desire for a broad scope, to "show how human justice, the environment, are all [issues that are] deeply connected," as Shan explains. Meanwhile, using Citigroup as a grand example is a constant reminder that we're not just goofing around out here. The enemy is real, and if we learn these skills well enough we'll be ready to go out and fight.

That means crash courses in everything from the technical challenges of walkie-talkies to the logistical headaches of a long-term campaign. In legal training, a veteran of multiple arrests instructs the uninitiated on what to say while being carted away, and we repeat dutifully after her: "I do not consent to this procedure! I will not answer questions! I want to see an attorney!" The blockades workshop shows the correct

Continued on page 36